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To

Col. Theodor Roosevelt

from the Translator

the Old English section

May 1913.

To each of us here the end must come
of life upon earth: let him, who may
win praise ere death, I deem that best
The lot of the brave, when life is done.

Beowulf.

WORKS WRITTEN OR EDITED BY

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NEW YORK CHICAGO

EARLY ENGLISH POEMS

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

HENRY S. PANCOAST

AND

JOHN DUNCAN SPAETH

NEW YORK

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1911

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PREFACE

THIS collection (as a glance at the contents will show) is intended to illustrate by representative selections the progress of English poetry from its remote beginnings to the latter part of the sixteenth century. In fact, although not in name, it forms an introductory volume to Mr. Pancoast's *Standard English Poems*. As the selections in the *Standard English Poems* begin with Spenser, toward the close of the sixteenth century, and end with the Victorian poets, the two collections, taken together, are designed to illustrate the entire course of English poetry, so far as the limitations of space and the plan of the books will permit.

The present collection opens with some of the earliest surviving expressions of the English race in literature; it follows the main stream of English poetry through Anglo-Saxon and through Norman England, — from the days of the gleeman to the days of the trouvère; it moves on through medieval England to the complex and changing era of Chaucer and Langland; it carries us on through the fifteenth century, when the nation was crossing the marches that lay between the old age and the new; it shows the entrance into poetry of new forms and new ideals, and it ends just as the greatest period of Elizabethan literature — the age of Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare — is about to begin. It is a long journey from the days before England was, when Widsith the Gleeman unlocked his word-hoard, to that triumphant epoch when the Armada was shattered, and when Spenser wrote the *Faerie Queene*. In attempting to illustrate the history of English poetry through so great a stretch of time, the most that can be done in an anthology of this scope and character

is to suggest by a few representative and significant examples the general course of poetry in its long progress.

It is hardly possible to follow this broadening stream of poetry without reflecting on the great change that has taken place in our attitude towards the beginnings of English history and literature. It is not so very long ago that the mass of readers knew and cared little about the life and literature of the earliest England. To Milton, as we all know, the petty wars between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms seemed of no more moment than "the battles of crows and kites," while the youthful Addison pronounced the poetry of Chaucer too rude and barbarous to please the cultivated taste of his politer age — the age of the Mohawks and the *Dunciad*. Since Pope's time, and especially during the last hundred years, the labours of a host of writers, translators, and investigators have uncovered to the sun and air these dark and neglected places of England's past; and not only the literature, but the early life, the religion, and the political institutions of early England have been made comparatively open and familiar. It is hardly too much to say that the scholars, especially those of Germany and England, have recovered for us a half forgotten and neglected world. Yet even now, while much has been accomplished, the earlier poetry of England is only beginning to come into its own. The scholars have prepared the way, but the poetry of early England does not belong to the scholar alone; it has more than a philological or an antiquarian value; it has — with all its shortcomings — a human interest and a poetic quality which entitle it to become the possession of all who love literature for its own sake. There are indications on every hand that this early literature is no longer the exclusive property of the specialist, but that it is being rapidly annexed to the vast domain which all lovers of English literature enjoy in common. In the latest edition of Chambers's *Cyclopedia of English Literature* the space given to the Anglo-Saxon period

has been increased tenfold. The earliest selections in Palgrave's classic *Golden Treasury* (first published just fifty years ago) date from about the middle of the sixteenth century; the earliest selections in the *Oxford Book of Verse* take us back to about 1250. It is this change of attitude towards our earlier poetry, rather than any personal difference of taste between the editors of these two admirable collections, that has won us these additional three hundred years.

This change of attitude, which might be illustrated by many similar examples, is assuredly a sign of progress. It is no depreciation of the labor of the scholar, but rather an evidence of its value. It is plain that the researches of the specialist in these fields, minute and contracted as they may have sometimes seemed, have had a wider influence, a more general significance, than might at first have been supposed. It is plain that these intensive students of the life, language, and literature of early England may be justly compared to those adventurers who press on in the van of immigration, and so open up to civilization regions hitherto inaccessible, or but sparsely settled.

In this work of reclamation the translator as well as the pioneer scholar has his place and office. It is better, of course, to read this early literature in the language in which it was written, than to read it in translation, but it is better to read it in a translation, or in a modernized form, than not to read it at all. We may regret that Keats could not read the *Iliad* in Greek, and we may be thankful at the same time that he *did* read it in English.

This collection is intended for the use and enjoyment of those students and lovers of poetry who are unacquainted with Old and Middle English. This purpose committed the editors to the task of translation and modernization. They felt that students of language were comparatively well provided for in books of another class, and that it was in any

case impracticable to furnish adequate linguistic apparatus in a book of this scope. In approaching their task the editors were agreed that faithfulness to the spirit of a poem should take precedence of a literal exactness in the rendering. The translations are not intended to be used as an aid to reading the originals, but as reproductions that shall give the modern English reader an impression analogous to that made by the originals upon contemporaries. The principle which the editors have had before them is in fact identical with that recently advocated by Francis Storr in the *Educational Review* (November, 1909), and they heartily subscribe to Rossetti's canon of translation there quoted: "The life-blood of rhythmical translation is this commandment that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation as far as possible with one more possession of beauty. Poetry not being an exact science, literality of rendering is altogether secondary to this chief law. I say literality, not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing."

While the editors hold themselves responsible in common for the general plan and scope of the book, and for the general principles above mentioned, in their actual application to the material in hand there was a division of labor. Mr. Spaeth is responsible for the Old English section, selection, translation, and notes; Mr. Pancoast is responsible for the rest of the book, selection, translation, modernization, and notes.

The editor of the Old English section has stated in a special note his views on the method of rendering Old English verse. He believes that the translator who renders Old into Modern English is under obligation of loyalty to the genius of Modern English, as well as that of Old English. "Conflict of loyalty" is a familiar tragic motive in Germanic Epic. A translation can hardly be called "faithful," if in its loyalty to a dead tongue it butchers a living one. These translations

represent at least an effort to make English poetry out of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Many of them were made years ago, and read to classes in the Boys' High School at Philadelphia. Like the poems they aim to reproduce, they led a mouth-to-ear existence long before they were elevated to the dignity of "letters." Even now the translator would wish to have them judged chiefly by their effect when read aloud. The older the poetry, the more vocal it is. Versions of Old English poetry that fail to make their appeal through the living rhythms of the living voice fail not only in an essential of all poetry, but in a quintessential of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Before the final revision of the *Widsith* and *Beowulf* version was made, Professor Gummere's *Oldest English Epic* appeared. The translator is glad to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Gummere, as what worker in this field must not, and to thank him for the interest with which he listened to some of these translations years ago. To his colleagues in the English Faculty at Princeton, and especially to his friend, Professor Axson, he wishes to express his thanks for helpful criticism when the book in a preliminary form was in use with the sophomore class at Princeton.

In a collection of this scope and character each period has its own peculiar problems and difficulties for the editor. The editor of the period from the Norman Conquest to Spenser was called upon to deal with poetry of widely different times, and in some cases, of different dialects. Some of this poetry, like Layamon's *Brut*, or the *Pearl*, is almost unintelligible to the modern reader in its original form; some of it, on the other hand, belongs to the early Elizabethan period, and hence its language does not differ materially from that of our own day. To what extent should this poetry, which covers, roughly speaking, a period of some four hundred years, be given a modern form? The purpose of the book made it imperative that this poetry should be made readily intelligible from first to last, and at

the same time the editor was reluctant to discard any obsolete word which could be readily understood or explained, and was anxious to preserve as far as possible the flavor of the original. After some experimenting, the editor decided to be bound by no iron rule, but, at the risk of being thought inconsistent, to treat each poem as a separate problem, rendering each selection as best he could, changing as little or as much as seemed expedient, unconstrained by what he had done in other cases. For instance, it was felt that further modernization would have been fatal to the melody of such a charming lyric as *When the Nightingale Sings* (p. 168), and so, at the sacrifice of consistency, fewer changes were made in it than in some of the other songs dating from about the same time. This method, of course, is open to one objection. In order to make all the poems intelligible, the editor was compelled practically to translate some of the earlier selections, while the later poems could safely be given almost without change. As a result of this, some of the later poems contain more unfamiliar words, and are apparently written in an older English than selections of an earlier date. While this is to be regretted, the editor, feeling himself confronted with a choice of evils, chose what seemed to be the least.

One departure has been made from the general plan of the book: the selections from Chaucer have been given unmodernized. The reasons for this inconsistency are so obvious that it does not seem to require any explanation. Except in a few cases, the editor has followed the text of Chaucer in the Globe edition.

Two poems in the Middle English period, *Poema Morale* (p. 122) and *Alysoun* (p. 164), are given as they appear in Horace M. Kennedy's translation of Ten Brink's *Early English Literature*, while the version of the passage from the *Ormulum*, on p. 122, is taken from Chambers's *Cyclopedia of English Literature*.

The obligations of the editor of the later portion of the book are more than he can here specifically acknowledge. One of the pleasantest features of work of this character is the help that is so freely and kindly given on every hand. The editor cannot refrain, however, from expressing his appreciation of the kindness and courtesy shown him by those in charge of the Library Company of Philadelphia, of the Library of the University of Pennsylvania, and of the Free Library of Philadelphia. To this acknowledgment the editor must add a word of gratitude to his friends, Dr. Schelling, Dr. Child, and Mr. Shelly of the University of Pennsylvania.

H. S. P.
J. D. S.

JUNE 1, 1911.

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EARLY ENGLISH POEMS

PART FIRST

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

I. CHARMS

THE PLOUGHMAN'S CHARM

Here is the remedy how thou mayest cure thy land if it refuses to bear, or if aught untoward hath befallen it by way of witchcraft or sorcery. Strew seed on the body of the plough and repeat these words:—

Erce, Erce, Erce, Mother of Earth, (*49*)
May the Almighty, Lord Everlasting,
Grant thee fields, green and fertile,
Grant thee fields, fruitful and growing,
Hosts of Spear-shafts, shining harvests,
  Harvest of Barley the broad,
  Harvest of Wheat the white,
All the heaping harvests of earth!
May the Almighty Lord Everlasting,
And his holy saints in heaven above,
From fiend and foe defend this land,
Keep it from blight and coming of harm,
From spell of witches wickedly spread!
Now I pray the Almighty who made this world,

That malice of man, or mouth of woman
Never may weaken the words I have spoken.

Start the plough, and when the first furrow is turned, say:—

Hail to thee Earth, Mother of men! (67)
Grow and be great in God's embrace,
Filled with fruit for the food of men!

Knead a loaf of bread with milk and holy water, lay it under the first furrow and say:—

Field be full of food for men,
Blossom bright, for blessed thou art
In the name of the Holy who made the Heavens,
Created the earth whereon we live.
God who gavest this ground
Grant us growth and increase
Let each seed that is sown, sprout and be useful.

CHARM FOR A SUDDEN STITCH

Take feverfew, and plantain, and the red nettle that grows into the house. Boil in butter. Say:—

Loud was their cry as they came o'er the hill;
Fierce was their rage as they rode o'er the land.
Take heed and be healed of the hurt they have done thee.
Out little spear if in there thou be!
My shield I lifted, my linden-wood shining,
When the mighty women mustered their force,
And sent their spear-points spinning toward me.
I'll give them back the bolt they sent,
A flying arrow full in the face.
Out little spear if in there thou be!

Sat a smith,
A hard blade hammered.
Out little spear if in there thou be!
Six smiths sat,
Fighting spears forged they.
Out spear, out!
No longer stay in!
If any iron be found herein,
The work of witches, away it must melt.
Be thou shot in the fell,
Be thou shot in the flesh,
Be thou shot in the blood,
Be thou shot in the bone,
Be thou shot in the limb,
Thy life shall be-shielded.
Be it shot of Esė,
Be it shot of Elves,
Be it shot of Hags,
I help thee surely.
This for cure of Esa-shot,
This for cure of Elf-shot,
This for cure of Hag-shot,
I help thee surely.
Witch fly away to the woods and the mountains.
Healed be thy hurt! So help thee the Lord.

II. OLD ENGLISH EPIC

THE LIFE OF THE GLEEMAN

(From the *Widsith*)

Widsith unlocked his store of lays.
Farthest he fared among folk on earth
Through sundry lands receiving gifts

In many a mead-hall. From Myrgings sprung
His ancient line. With Alhild beloved
Weaver of peace he went at the first
From Angles to east of us, to Ermanric's home,
King of the Reth-Goths, the ruthless traitor
And treaty-breaker. Much-travelled he sang:—

. . . . . .

I was with Ermanric all that time (*88*)
But the king of the Goths proved kind to me
Gave me a ring that royal giver,
Of gold-work pure, worth good six hundred
Shining shillings, as shown by scale.
When home I returned, my treasure I gave
To Edgils my lord, my beloved protector,
In lieu of the lands he let me hold,
The ruler of Myrgings, in right of my father.
Alhild my lady, Edwin's daughter,
Queen of the daring, bequeathed me another;
Praise of her bounty was published abroad,
When I made my lays through many a land;
Told of the goodliest gold-decked queen
Known among men for making of gifts.
Then Shilling and I with clear voice chanting,
Lifted the song before our lord.
Loud to the harp our lay rang out;
Many there were, warriors mighty,
Skilled in our art who openly said
They never heard singing of songs that was better.
Far I roamed o'er the realm of the Goths,
Seeking for comrades the strongest and bravest:
Ever the first were Ermanric's followers. . . .(*111*)
Many a spear, sped from the midst of them, (*127*)
Yelling aloud as it leaped at the foe.
Wudga and Hama took women and men;
The banished comrades won booty of gold.

In all my faring I found it true:
He to whom God hath given the power
To be lord of men, is most beloved,
Who holds his kingdom while here he lives.

Thus fated to wander, wayfaring gleemen
Make their songs in many a land,
Saying their need and speaking their thanks.
North or South, some one they meet,
A judge of songs or a generous giver,
Proud to be praised in presence of liegemen,
Honored in lays till all is fled,
Life and light together. Who lives for glory
Holds under heaven the height of fame.

Beowulf

THE MYTH OF THE SHEAF-CHILD

(From *Beowulf*, lines 1-52)

List to an old-time lay of the Spear-Danes,
Full of the prowess of famous kings,
Deeds of renown that were done by the heroes;
Scyld the Sheaf-child from scourging foemen,
From raiders a-many their mead-halls wrested.
He lived to be feared, though first as a waif,
Puny and frail he was found on the shore.
He grew to be great, and was girt with power
Till the border-tribes all obeyed his rule,
And sea-folk hardy that sit by the whale-path
Gave him tribute, a good king he was.
In after years an heir was born to him,
A goodly youth, whom God had sent
To stay and support his people in need.

(Long time leaderless living in woe,
The sorrow they suffered He saw full well.)
The Lord of Glory did lend him honor,
Beowulf's fame afar was borne,
Son of old Scyld in the Scandian lands.
A youthful heir must be open-handed,
Furnish the friends of his father with plenty,
That thus in his age, in the hour of battle,
Willing comrades may crowd around him
Eager and true. In every tribe
Honorable deeds shall adorn an earl.

The aged Scyld, when his hour had come,
Famous and praised, departed to God.
His faithful comrades carried him down
To the brink of the sea, as himself had bidden,
The Scyldings' friend before he fell silent,
Their lord beloved who long had ruled them.
Out in the bay a boat was waiting
Coated with ice, 'twas the King's own barge.
They lifted aboard their bracelet-bestower,
And down on the deck their dear lord laid,
Hard by the mast. Heaped-up treasure
Gathered from far they gave him along.
Never was ship more nobly laden
With wondrous weapons and warlike gear.
Swords and corselets covered his breast,
Floating riches to ride afar with him
Out o'er the waves at the will of the sea.
No less they dowered their lord with treasure,
Things of price, than those who at first
Had launched him forth as a little child
Alone on the deep to drift o'er the billows.
They gave him to boot a gilded banner,
High o'er his head they hung it aloft,

Then set him adrift, let the surges bear him:
Sad were their hearts, their spirits mournful;
Man hath not heard, no mortal can say
Who found that barge's floating burden.

THE SEA VOYAGE

(From *Beowulf*, lines 205-257)

Beowulf, the hero, grew up at the court of his uncle Hygelac, King of the Geats or Jutes. Having heard how Heorot the great hall of the Danish Hrothgar, was ravaged by a man-monster named Grendel, he determined to rid King Hrothgar of his unbidden guest, and prepared for the adventure.

Beowulf chose from the band of the Jutes (205)
Heroes brave, the best he could find;
He with fourteen followers hardy
Went to embark: he was wise in seamanship,
Showed them the landmarks, leading the way.

Soon they descried their craft in the water,
At the foot of the cliff. Then climbed aboard
The chosen troop; the tide was churning
Sea against sand; they stowed away
In the hold of the ship their shining armor,
War-gear and weapons; the warriors launched
Their well-braced boat on her welcome voyage.

Swift o'er the waves with a wind that favored,
Foam on her breast, like a bird she flew
A day and a night they drove to seaward,
Cut the waves with the curving prow,
Till the seamen that sailed her sighted the land,
Shining cliffs and coast-wise hills,

Headlands bold. The harbor opened,
Their cruise was ended. Then quickly the sailors
The crew of Weder-folk clambered ashore;
Moored their craft with clank of chain-mail
And goodly war-gear. God they thanked
That their way was smooth o'er the surging waves.

High on the shore, the Scylding coast-guard
Saw from the cliff where he kept his watch,
Glittering shields o'er the gang-plank carried,
Polished weapons: it puzzled him sore,
He wondered in mind who the men might be.
Down to the strand on his steed came riding
Hrothgar's thane, with threatening arm
Shook his war-spear and shouted this challenge:
"Who are ye, men, all mailed and harnessed
That brought yon ship o'er the broad sea-ways
And hither have come across the water
To land on our shores. Long have I stood
As coast-guard here, and kept my sea-watch
Lest harrying foe with hostile fleet
Should dare to damage our Danish land.
Armed men never from overseas came
More openly hither. But how do ye know
That law of the land doth give ye leave
To come thus near. I never have seen
Statelier earl upon earth than him,—
Yon hero in harness. No house-carl he,
In lordly array, if looks speak true,
And noble bearing. But now I must learn
Your names and country, ere nearer ye come,
Underhand spies, for aught I know,
In Danish land. Now listen ye strangers,
In from the sea, to my open challenge:
Heed ye my words and haste me to know
What your errand and whence ye have come.

THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL

(From *Beowulf*, lines 710-836)

Beowulf made known his errand, and was welcomed in Heorot by the Danish King. When darkness fell, Hrothgar wished Beowulf and his men godspeed, and left the hall. The hero, ere he lay down, put away his weapons, for, said he, "I count myself not inferior to Grendel in main strength, therefore I will meet him in straight hand-to-hand fashion, and leave the issue to fate."

Now Grendel came, from his crags of mist (710)
Across the moor; he was curst of God.
The murderous prowler meant to surprise
In the high-built hall his human prey.
He stalked neath the clouds, till steep before him
The house of revelry rose in his path,
The gold-hall of heroes, the gaily adorned.
Hrothgar's home he had hunted full often,
But never before had he found to receive him
So hardy a hero, such hall-guards there.
Close to the building crept the slayer,
Doomed to misery. The door gave way,
Though fastened with bolts, when his fist fell on it.
Maddened he broke through the breach he had made;
Swoln with anger and eager to slay,
The ravening fiend o'er the bright-paved floor
Furious ran, while flashed from his eyes
An ugly glare like embers aglow.
He saw in the hall, all huddled together,
The heroes asleep. Then laughed in his heart
The hideous fiend; he hoped ere dawn
To sunder body from soul of each;
He looked to appease his lust of blood,
Glut his maw with the men he would slay.

But Wyrd had otherwise willed his doom;
Never again should he get a victim
After that night. Narrowly watched
Hygėlac's thane how the horrible slayer
Forward should charge in fierce attack.
Nor was the monster minded to wait:
Sudden he sprang on a sleeping thane,
Ere he could stir he slit him open;
Bit through the bone-joints, gulped the blood,
Greedily bolted the body piecemeal.
Soon he had swallowed the slain man wholly,
Hands and feet. Then forward he hastened,
Sprang at the hero, and seized him at rest;
Fiercely clutched him with fiendish claw.
But quickly Beowulf caught his forearm,
And threw himself on it with all his weight.
Straight discovered that crafty plotter,
That never in all midearth had he met
In any man a mightier grip.
Gone was his courage, and craven fear
Sat in his heart, yet helped him no sooner.
Fain would he hide in his hole in the fenland,
His devil's den. A different welcome
From former days he found that night!
Now Hygėlac's thane, the hardy, remembered
His evening's boast, and bounding up,
Grendel he clenched, and cracked his fingers;
The monster tried flight, but the man pursued;
The ravager hoped to wrench himself free,
And gain the fen, for he felt his fingers
Helpless and limp in the hold of his foe.
'Twas a sorry visit the man-devourer
Made to the Hall of the Hart that night.
Dread was the din, the Danes in their houses
Listened in awe to the ale-spilling fray.
The hardiest blenched as the hall-foes wrestled

In terrible rage. The rafters groaned;
'Twas wonder great that the wine-hall stood,
Firm 'gainst the fighters' furious onslaught,
Nor fell to the ground, that glorious building.
With bands of iron 'twas braced and stiffened
Within and without. But off from the sill
Many a mead-bench mounted with gold
Was wrung where they wrestled in wrath together.
The Scylding nobles never imagined
That open attack, or treacherous cunning,
Could wreck or ruin their royal hall,
The lofty and antlered, unless the flames
Should some day swallow it up in smoke.

The din was renewed, the noise redoubled;
Each man of the Danes was mute with dread,
That heard from the wall the wail of woe,
The gruesome song of the godless fiend,
His howl of defeat, as the slave of hell
Bemoaned his hurt. The man held fast;
Greatest he was in grip of strength,
Of all that dwelt upon earth that day.
Loath in his heart was the hero-deliverer
To let escape his slaughterous guest.
Of little use that life he deemed
To human kind. The comrades of Beowulf
Unsheathed their weapons to ward their leader;
Eagerly brandished their ancient blades,
The life of their peerless lord to defend.
Little they deemed, those dauntless warriors,
As they leaped to the fray, those lusty fighters,
Laying on boldly to left and to right,
Eager to slay, that no sword upon earth
No keenest weapon could wound that monster:
Point would not pierce, he was proof against iron;
'Gainst victory-blades the devourer was charmed.

But a woful end awaited the wretch,
That very day he was doomed to depart,
And fare afar to the fiends' domain.

Now Grendel found, who in former days
So many a warrior had wantonly slain,
In brutish lust, abandoned of God,
That the frame of his body was breaking at last.
Keen of courage, the kinsman of Hygėlac
Held him grimly gripped in his hands.
Loath was each to the other alive.
The grisly monster got his death-wound:
A huge split opened under his shoulder;
Crunched the socket, cracked the sinews,
Glory great was given to Beowulf.
But Grendel escaped with his gaping wound,
O'er the dreary moor his dark den sought,
Crawled to his lair. 'Twas clear to him then,
The count of his hours to end had come,
Done were his days. The Danes were glad,
The hard fight was over, they had their desire.
Cleared was the hall, 'twas cleansed by the hero
With keen heart and courage, who came from afar.
The Lord of the Jutes rejoiced in his work,
The deed of renown he had done that night.
His boast to the Danes he bravely fulfilled;
From lingering woe delivered them all;
From heavy sorrow they suffered in heart;
From dire distress they endured so long;
From toil and from trouble. This token they saw:
The hero had laid the hand of Grendel
Both arm and claws, the whole forequarter
With clutches huge, 'neath the high-peaked roof.

THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER

(From *Beowulf*, 1345-1650)

After a day spent in song and feast, the hall was cleared, and the Danes slept in it as of old. But during the night there was an unlooked for attack. Grendel's dam, a wolfish water-wife, broke into Hart Hall, and carried off the king's best thane. The next morning Beowulf, who had slept elsewhere, heard from Hrothgar what had happened, and was asked to undertake a second and more perilous adventure. But first the king described to him the haunts of the monsters.

"I have heard my people, the peasant folk (*1345*)
Who house by the border and hold the fens,
Say they have seen two creatures strange,
Huge march-stalkers, haunting the moorland,
Wanderers outcast. One of the two
Seemed to their sight to resemble a woman;
The other manlike, a monster misshapen,
But huger in bulk than human kind,
Trod an exile's track of woe.
The folk of the fen in former days
Named him Grendel. Unknown his father,
Or what his descent from demons obscure.
Lonely and waste is the land they inhabit,
Wolf-cliffs wild and windy headlands,
Ledges of mist, where mountain torrents
Downward plunge to dark abysses,
And flow unseen. Not far from here
O'er the moorland in miles, a mere expands:
Spray-frosted trees o'erspread it, and hang
O'er the water with roots fast wedged in the rocks.
There nightly is seen, beneath the flood,
A marvellous light. There lives not the man
Has fathomed the depth of the dismal mere.

Though the heather-stepper, the strong-horned stag,
Seek this cover, forspent with the chase,
Tracked by the hounds, he will turn at bay,
To die on the brink ere he brave the plunge,
Hide his head in the haunted pool.
Wan from its depths the waves are dashed,
When wicked storms are stirred by the wind,
And from sullen skies descends the rain.
In thee is our hope of help once more.
Not yet thou hast learned where leads the way
To the lurking-hole of this hatcher of outrage.
Seek, if thou dare, the dreaded spot!
Richly I pay thee for risking this fight,
With heirlooms golden and ancient rings,
As I paid thee before, if thou come back alive."
Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Sorrow not gray-beard, nor grieve o'er thy friend!
Vengeance is better than bootless mourning.
To each of us here the end must come
Of life upon earth: let him who may
Win glory ere death. I deem that best,
The lot of the brave, when life is over.
Rise, O realm-ward, ride we in haste,
To track the hag that whelped this Grendel.
I tell thee in truth, she may turn where she will,
No cave of ocean nor cover of wood,
No hole in the ground shall hide her from me.
But one day more thy woe endure,
And nurse thy hope as I know thou wilt."
Sprang to his feet the sage old king,
Gave praise to God for the promise spoken.
And now for Hrothgar a horse was bridled,
A curly-maned steed. The king rode on,
Bold on his charger. A band of shield-men
Followed on foot. Afar they saw
Footprints leading along the forest.

They followed the tracks, and found she had crossed
Over the dark moor, dragging the body
Of the goodliest thane that guarded with Hrothgar
Heorot Hall, and the home of the king.
The well-born hero held the trail;
Up rugged paths, o'er perilous ridges,
Through passes narrow, an unknown way,
By beetling crags, and caves of the nicors.
He went before with a chosen few,
Warriors skilled, to scan the way.
Sudden they came on a cluster of trees
Overhanging a hoary rock,
A gloomy grove; and gurgling below,
A stir of waters all stained with blood.
Sick at heart were the Scylding chiefs,
Many a thane was thrilled with woe,
For there they beheld the head of Æscherè
Far beneath at the foot of the cliff.
They leaned and watched the waters boil
With bloody froth. The band sat down,
While the war-horn sang its summons to battle.
They saw in the water sea-snakes a many,
Wave-monsters weird, that wallowed about.
At the base of the cliff lay basking the nicors,
Who oft at sunrise ply seaward their journey,
To hunt on the ship-trails and scour the main,
Sea-beasts and serpents. Sudden they fled,
Wrathful and grim, aroused by the hail
Of the battle-horn shrill. The chief of the Jutes,
With a bolt from his bow a beast did sunder
From life and sea-frolic; sent the keen shaft
Straight to his vitals. Slow he floated,
Upturned and dead at the top of the waves.
Eager they boarded their ocean-quarry;
With barb-hooked boar-spears the beast they gaffed,
Savagely broached him and brought him to shore,

Wave-plunger weird. The warriors viewed
The grisly stranger. But straightway Beowulf
Donned his corslet nor cared for his life. . . . (*1442*)

To Hrothgar spoke the son of Ecgtheow: (*1473*)
"Remember O honored heir of Heälfdenė,
Now that I go, thou noble king,
Warriors' gold-friend, what we agreed on,
If I my life should lose in thy cause,
That thou wouldst stand in stead of my father,
Fulfil his office when I was gone.
Be guardian thou, to my thanes and kinsmen,
My faithful friends, if I fail to return.
To Hygėlac send, Hrothgar beloved,
The goodly gifts thou gavest to me.
May the Lord of the Jutes, when he looks on this treasure,
May Hrethel's son, when he sees these gifts,
Know that I found a noble giver,
And joyed while I lived, in a generous lord.
This ancient heirloom to Unferth give,
To the far-famed warrior, my wondrous sword
Of matchless metal, I must with Hrunting
Glory gain, or go to my death."

After these words the Weder-Jute lord
Sprang to his task, nor staid for an answer.
Swiftly he sank 'neath the swirling flood;
'Twas an hour's time ere he touched the bottom.
Soon the sea-hag, savage and wild,
Who had roamed through her watery realms at will,
For winters a hundred, was 'ware from below
An earthling had entered her ocean domain.
Quickly she reached and caught the hero;
Grappled him grimly with gruesome claws.
Yet he got no scratch, his skin was whole;

His battle-sark shielded his body from harm.
In vain she tried, with her crooked fingers,
To tear the links of his close-locked mail.
Away to her den the wolf-slut dragged
Beowulf the bold, o'er the bottom ooze.
Though eager to smite her, his arm was helpless.
Swimming monsters swarmed about him,
Dented his mail with dreadful tusks.
Sudden the warrior was 'ware they had come
To a sea-hall strange and seeming hostile,
Where water was not nor waves oppressed,
For the caverned rock all round kept back
The swallowing sea. He saw a light,
A flicker of flame that flashed and shone.
Now first he discerned the sea-hag monstrous,
The water-wife wolfish. His weapon he raised,
And struck with his sword a swinging blow.
Sang on her head the hard-forged blade
Its war-song wild. But the warrior found
That his battle-flasher refused to bite,
Or maim the foe. It failed its master
In the hour of need, though oft it had cloven
Helmets, and carved the casques of the doomed
In combats fierce. For the first time now
His treasure failed him, fallen from honor.
But Hygėlac's earl took heart of courage;
In mood defiant he fronted his foe.
The angry hero hurled to the ground,
In high disdain, the hilt of the sword,
The gaudy and jewelled; rejoiced in the strength
Of his arm unaided. So all should do
Who glory would find and fame abiding,
In the crash of conflict, nor care for their lives
The Lord of the Battle-Jutes braved the encounter;
The murderous hag by the hair he caught;
Down he dragged the dam of Grendel

In his swelling rage, till she sprawled on the floor.
Quick to repay in kind what she got,
On her foe she fastened her fearful clutches;
Enfolded the warrior weary with fighting;
The sure-footed hero stumbled and fell.
On his prostrate body she squatted enormous;
Unsheathed her hip-knife, shining and broad,
Her son to avenge, her offspring sole.
But the close-linked corslet covered his breast,
Foiled the stroke and saved his life.
All had been over with Ecgtheow's son,
Under the depths of the Ocean vast,
Had not his harness availed to help him,
His battle-net stiff, and the strength of God.
The Ruler of battles aright decided it;
The Wielder all-wise awarded the victory:
Lightly the hero leaped to his feet.
He spied 'mongst the arms a sword surpassing,
Huge and ancient, a hard-forged slayer,
Weapon matchless and warriors' delight,
Save that its weight was more than another
Might bear into battle or brandish in war;
Giants had forged that finest of blades.
Then seized its chain-hilt the chief of the Scyldings;
His wrath was aroused, reckless his mood,
As he brandished the sword for a savage blow.
Bit the blade in the back of her neck,
Cut the neck-bone, and cleft its way
Clean through her body; she sank to the ground;
The sword was gory; glad was the hero.
A light flashed out from the inmost den,
Like heaven's candle, when clear it shines
From cloudless skies. He scanned the cave,
Walked by the wall, his weapon upraised;
Grim in his hand the hilt he gripped.
Well that sword had served him in battle.

Steadily onward he strode through the cave,
Ready to wreak the wrongs untold,
That the man-beast had wrought in the realm of the Danes. . . . (1579)
He gave him his due when Grendel he found (1589)
Stretched as in sleep, and spent with the battle.
But dead was the fiend, the fight at Heorot
Had laid him low. The lifeless body
Sprang from the blows of Beowulf's sword,
As fiercely he hacked the head from the carcass.

But the men who were watching the water with Hrothgar
Suddenly saw a stir in the waves,
The chop of the sea all churned up with blood
And bubbling gore. The gray-haired chiefs
For Beowulf grieved, agreeing together
That hope there was none of his home-returning,
With victory crowned, to revisit his lord.
Most of them feared he had fallen prey
To the mere-wolf dread in the depths of the sea.
When evening came, the Scyldings all
Forsook the headland, and Hrothgar himself
Turned homeward his steps. But sick at heart
The strangers sat and stared at the sea,
Hoped against hope to behold their comrade
And leader again.
Now that goodly sword
Began to melt with the gore of the monster;
In bloody drippings it dwindled away.
'Twas a marvellous sight: it melted like ice,
When fetters of frost the Father unlocks,
Unravels the ropes of the wrinkled ice,
Lord and Master of months and seasons.
Beheld in the hall the hero from Juteland
Treasures unnumbered, but naught he took,
Save Grendel's head, and the hilt of the sword,

Bright and jeweled,—the blade had melted,
Its metal had vanished, so venomous hot
Was the blood of the demon-brute dead in the cave.

Soon was in the sea the slayer of monsters;
Upward he shot through the shimmer of waves;
Cleared was the ocean, cleansed were its waters,
The wolfish water-hag wallowed no more;
The mere-wife had yielded her miserable life.
Swift to the shore the sailors' deliverer
Came lustily swimming, with sea-spoil laden;
Rejoiced in the burden he bore to the land.
Ran to meet him his mailèd comrades,
With thanks to God who gave them their leader
Safe again back and sound from the deep.
Quickly their hero's helmet they loosened,
Unbuckled his breastplate. The blood-stained waves
Fell to a calm 'neath the quiet sky.
Back they returned o'er the tracks with the footprints,
Merrily measured the miles o'er the fen,
Way they knew well, those warriors brave;
Brought from the holm-cliff the head of the monster;
'Twas toil and labor to lift the burden,
Four of their stoutest scarce could carry it
Swung from a spear-pole, a staggering load. . . . (*1638*)
Thus the fourteen of them, thanes adventurous, (*1641*)
Marched o'er the moor to the mead-hall of Hrothgar.
Tall in the midst of them towered the hero;
Strode among his comrades, till they came to the hall.
In went Beowulf, the brave and victorious,
Battle-beast hardy, Hrothgar to greet.
Lifting by the hair the head of Grendel,
They laid it in the hall, where the heroes were carousing,
Right before the king, and right before the queen;
Gruesome was the sight that greeted the Danes.

BEOWULF'S LAST FIGHT AND DEATH

(Lines 2511-2820)

Beowulf left with the Danes his grisly trophies of battle, the head of Grendel, his huge forequarter, and the hilt of the giant sword with its mystical runic inscription. Loading his boat with the gifts of Hrothgar, he and his comrades sailed away home. After the death of Hygėlac and his son, Beowulf became king of the Jutes, and ruled over them fifty years. In his old age his people were harried by a fire-dragon whom the hero went out to fight. It seems that an outlaw, banished and flying for shelter, had come upon a treasure hid in a deep cave or barrow, guarded by a dragon. Long years before, an earl, the last of his race, had buried the treasure. After his death the dragon, sniffing about the stones, had found it and guarded it three hundred years, until the banished man discovered the place, and carried off one of the golden goblets. In revenge the dragon made nightly raids on Beowulf's realm, flying through the air, spitting fire, burning houses and villages, even Beowulf's hall, the "gift-stool" of the Jutes. Beowulf had an iron shield made against the dragon's fiery breath, and with eleven companions, sought out the hill-vault near the sea. Before attacking the monster he spoke these words to his comrades:

Beowulf said to them, brave words spoke he: (2511)
"Brunt of battles I bore in my youth,
One fight more I make this day.
I mean to win fame defending my people,
If the grim destroyer will seek me out,
Come at my call from his cavern dark."
Then he greeted his thanes each one,
For the last time hailed his helmeted warriors,
His comrades dear. "I should carry no sword,
No weapon of war 'gainst the worm should bear,
If the foe I might slay by strength of my arm,
As Grendel I slew long since by my hand.

But I look to fight a fiery battle,
With scorching puffs of poisonous breath.
For this I bear both breastplate and shield;
No foot will I flinch from the foe of the barrow.
Wyrd is over us, each shall meet
His doom ordained at the dragon-cliff!
Bold is my mood, but my boast I omit
'Gainst the battle-flier. Abide ye here,
Heroes in harness, hard by the barrow,
Cased in your armor the issue await:
Which of us two his wounds shall survive.
Not yours the attempt, the task is mine.
'Tis meant for no man but me alone
To measure his might 'gainst the monster fierce.
I get you the gold in glorious fight,
Or battle-death bitter shall bear off your lord."
Uprose with his shield the shining hero,
Bold 'neath his helmet. He bore his harness
In under the cliff; alone he went,
Himself he trusted; no task for faint-heart.
Then saw by the wall the warrior brave,
Hero of many a hard-fought battle,
Arches of stone that opened a way;
From the rocky gate there gushed a stream,
Bubbling and boiling with battle-fire.
So great the heat no hope was there
To come at the hoard in the cavern's depth,
Unscathed by the blast of the scorching dragon.
He let from his breast his battle-cry leap,
Swoln with rage was the royal Jute
Stormed the stout-heart; strong and clear
Through the gloom of the cave his cry went ringing.
Hate was aroused, the hoard-ward knew
The leader's hail. Too late 'twas now
To parley for peace. The poisonous breath
Of the monster shot from the mouth of the cave,

Reeking hot. The hollow earth rumbled.
The man by the rock upraised his shield,
The Lord of the Jutes, 'gainst the loathly dragon.
Now kindled for battle the curled-up beast;
The king undaunted with drawn sword stood,
('Twas an heirloom olden with edge of lightning)
Each was so fierce he affrighted the other.
Towering tall 'neath tilted shield,
Waited the king as the worm coiled back,
Sudden to spring: so stood he and waited.
Blazing he came in coils of fire
Swift to his doom. The shield of iron
Sheltered the hero too short a while,—
Life and limb it less protected
Than he hoped it would, for the weapon he held
First time that day he tried in battle;
Wyrd had not willed he should win the fight.
But the Lord of the Jutes uplifted his arm,
Smote the scaly worm, struck him so fierce
That his ancient bright-edged blade gave way,
Bent on the bone, and bit less sure
Than its owner had need in his hour of peril.
That sword-stroke roused the wrath of the cave-guard;
Fire and flame afar he spirted,
Blaze of battle; but Beowulf there
No victory boasted: his blade had failed him,
Naked in battle, as never it should have,
Well-tempered iron! Nor easy it was
For Ecgtheow's heir, honored and famous,
This earth to forsake, forever to leave it;
Yet he must go, against his will
Elsewhere to dwell. So we all must leave
This fleeting life.—Erelong the foes
Bursting with wrath the battle renewed.
The hoard-ward took heart, and with heaving breast
Came charging amain. The champion brave,

Strength of his people, was sore oppressed,
Enfolded by flame. No faithful comrades
Crowded about him, his chosen band,
All æthelings' sons, to save their lives,
Fled to the wood. One of them only
Felt surging sorrow; for nought can stifle
Call of kin in a comrade true;
Wiglaf his name, 'twas Weohstan's son
Shield-thane beloved, lord of the Scylfings
Ælfherê's kinsman. When his king he saw
Hard by the heat under helmet oppressed,
He remembered the gifts he had got of old,
Lands and wealth of the Wægmunding line,
The folk-rights all that his father's had been;
He could hold no longer, but hard he gripped
Linden shield yellow and ancient sword. . . . (*2610*)
For the first time there the faithful thane, (*2652*)
Youthful and stalwart, stood with his leader,
Shoulder to shoulder in shock of battle.
Nor melted his courage, nor cracked his blade,
His war-sword true, as the worm found out
When together they got in grim encounter.

Wiglaf in wrath upbraided his comrades,
Sore was his heart as he spake these words:
"Well I mind when our mead we drank
In the princely hall, how we promised our lord
Who gave us these rings and golden armlets,
That we would repay his war-gifts rich,
Helmets and armor, if haply should come
His hour of peril; us hath he made
Thanes of his choice for this adventure;
Spurred us to glory, and gave us these treasures
Because he deemed us doughty spearmen,
Helmeted warriors, hardy and brave.
Yet all the while, unhelped and alone,

He meant to finish this feat of strength,
Shepherd of men and mightiest lord
Of daring deeds. The day is come,—
Now is the hour he needs the aid
Of spearmen good. Let us go to him now,
Help our hero while hard bestead
By the nimble flames. God knows that I
Had rather the fire should ruthlessly fold
My body with his, than harbor me safe.
Shame it were surely our shields to carry
Home to our lands, unless we first
Slay this foe and save the life
Of the Weder-king. Full well I know
To leave him thus, alone to endure,
Bereft of aid, breaks ancient right.
My helmet and sword shall serve for us both,
Shield and armor we share to-day."

Waded the warrior through welter and reek;
Buckler and helmet he bore to his leader;
Heartened the hero with words of hope:
"Do thy best now, dearest Beowulf,
Years ago, in youth, thou vowedst
Living, ne'er to lose thine honor,
Shield thy life and show thy valor.
I stand by thee to the end!"
After these words the worm came on,
Snorting with rage, for a second charge;
All mottled with fire his foes he sought,
The warriors hated. But Wiglaf's shield
Was burnt to the boss by the billows of fire;
His harness helped not the hero young.
Shelter he found 'neath the shield of his kinsman,
When the crackling blaze had crumbled his own.
But mindful of glory, the mighty hero
Smote amain with his matchless sword.

Down it hurtled, driven by anger,
Till it stuck in the skull, then snapped the blade,
Broken was Nægling, Beowulf's sword,
Ancient and gray. 'Twas granted him never
To count on edge of iron in battle;
His hand was too heavy, too hard his strokes,
As I have heard tell, for every blade
He brandished in battle: the best gave way,
And left him helpless and hard bestead.
Now for a third time neared the destroyer;
The fire-drake fierce, old feuds remembering,
Charged the warrior who wavered an instant;
Blazing he came and closed his fangs
On Beowulf's throat; and throbbing spirts
Of life-blood dark o'erdrenched the hero.

Then in the hour of utmost peril,
The stripling proved what stock he came of;
Showed his endurance and dauntless courage.
Though burnt was his hand when he backed his kinsman,
With head unguarded the good thane charged,
Thrust from below at the loathly dragon,
Pierced with the point and plunged the blade in,
The gleaming-bright, till the glow abated
Waning low. Ere long the king
Came to himself, and swiftly drew
The warknife that hung at his harness' side,
And cut in two the coilèd monster.
So felled they the foe and finished him bravely,
Together they killed him, the kinsmen two,
A noble pair. So needs must do
Comrades in peril. For the king it proved
His uttermost triumph, the end of his deeds
And work in the world. The wound began,
Where the cave-dragon savage had sunk his teeth,
To swell and fever, and soon he felt

The baleful poison pulse through his blood,
And burn in his breast. The brave old warrior
Sat by the wall and summoned his thoughts,
Gazed on the wondrous work of the giants:
Arches of stone, firm-set on their pillars,
Upheld that hill-vault hoar and ancient.

Now Beowulf's thane, the brave and faithful,
Dashed with water his darling lord,
His comrade and king all covered with blood
And faint with the fight; unfastened his helmet.
Beowulf spoke despite his hurt,
His piteous wound. Full well he knew
His years on earth were ended now,
His hours of glad life gone for aye
His days alloted, and death was near:
"Now would I gladly give to a son
These weapons of war, had Wyrd but granted
That heir of my own should after me come,
Sprung from my loins. This land have I ruled
Fifty winters. No folk-king dared,
None of the chiefs of the neighboring tribes,
To touch me with sword or assail me with terror
Of battle-threats. I bided at home,
Held my peace and my heritage kept,
Seeking no feuds nor swearing false oaths.
This gives me comfort, and gladdens me now,
Though wounded sore and sick unto death.
As I leave my life the Lord may not charge me
With killing of kinsmen. Now quickly go,
Wiglaf beloved, to look at the hoard,
Where hidden it rests 'neath the hoary rock.
For the worm lies still, put asleep by his wound.
Robbed of his riches. Then rise and haste!
Give me to see that golden hoard,
Gaze on the store of glorious gems,

That easier then I may end my life,
Leave my lordship that long I held."

Swiftly, 'tis said, the son of Weohstan
Obeyed the words of his bleeding lord,
Maimed in the battle. Through the mouth of the cave
Boldly he bore his battle-net in.
Glad of the victory, he gazed about him;
Many a sun-bright jewel he saw,
Glittering gold, strewn on the ground,
Heaped in the den of the dragon hoary,
Old twilight-flier,—flagons once bright,
Wassail cups wondrous of warriors departed
Stript of their mountings, many a helmet
Ancient and rusted, armlets a many,
Curiously woven. (Wealth so hoarded,
Buried treasure, will taint with pride,
Him that hides it, whoever it be.)
Towering high o'er the hoard he saw
A gleaming banner with gold inwoven,
Of broidure rare, its radiance streamed
So bright, he could peer to the bounds of the cave,
Survey its wonders; no worm was seen.
Edge of the sword had ended his life.
Then, as they say, that single adventurer
Plundered the hoard that was piled by the giants;
Gathered together old goblets and platters,
Took what he liked; the towering banner
Brightest of beacons he brought likewise. . . . (*2776*)

.

So Wiglaf returned with treasure laden (*2783*)
The high-souled hero hastened his steps,
Anxiously wondered if he should find
The lord of the Weders alive where he left him
Sapped of his strength and stretched on the ground
As he came from the hill he beheld his comrade,

His lord of bounty, bleeding and faint,
Near unto death. He dashed him once more
Bravely with water, till burden of speech
Broke from his breast, and Beowulf spoke,
Gazing sad at the gold before him:
"For the harvest of gold that here I look on,
To the God of Glory I give my thanks.
To the Ruler Eternal I render praise
That ere I must go he granted me this,
To leave to my people this priceless hoard.
'Twas bought with my life; now look ye well
To my people's need when I have departed.
No more I may bide among ye here.
Bid the battle-famed build on the foreland
A far-seen barrow when flames have burnt me.
High o'er the headland of whales it shall tower,
A beacon and mark to remind my people.
And sailors shall call it in years to come
Beowulf's Barrow as back from afar
O'er the glooming deep they drive their keels."

The great-hearted king unclasped from his neck
A collar of gold and gave to his thane
The brave young warrior, his bright-gilt helmet,
Breastplate and ring. So bade him farewell:
"Thou art the last to be left of our house.
Wyrd hath o'erwhelmed our Wægmunding line,
Swept my kinsmen swift to their doom.
Earls in their prime. I must follow them."
These words were the last that the warrior gray
Found in his heart ere the flames he chose.
Swift from his bosom his soul departed
To find the reward of the faithful and true.

III. BIBLICAL EPIC

THE FALL OF MAN

(*Younger Genesis*, lines 246-764)

The Ruler of hosts, in the realms of heaven, (*246*)
By the strength of his arm established on high
Ten angel tribes: he trusted them well
To serve their leader and loyally work
The will of God, who gave them their reason,
Whose hand had shaped them, their Holy Lord.
He dowered them all with wealth;
but one He made so great,
Such wisdom He gave him of mind,
such might to wield,
In heaven he was next to God;
so glorious He made him,
So gleaming his hue on high,
that he had from his maker,
He was like unto shining stars.
His lord he was bound to serve,
Hold dear the bliss of heaven;
he was bound to thank his lord
For the bounteous gift of light
that so long He let him enjoy.
But he turned it all to evil,
and openly stirred up strife
Gainst Heaven's highest Ruler,
who sitteth on His holy throne.
Dear had he been to our King,
nor could it be kept from the Lord
That His angel proud, was plotting rebellion.

He rose 'gainst his ruler, and railed against God.
He uttered defiance, refused to serve Him;
Said that his body was bright and gleaming,
Wondrous and fair, nor would he further
Give obedience to God in heaven,
Or serve him longer. It seemed to himself
That his power and might were more than God's,
His followers firmer in fealty bound.
Many things uttered the angel in pride;
By the power of his single strength he planned
To make for himself a mightier throne,
A higher in heaven. His haughty mood
Urged him to own, in the North and West,
A stately hall. He said he doubted
Whether he further would follow God.
"Why should I toil" said he;
"I need acknowledge
No man for my master; I may with these hands
Work marvels as many. Mine is the power
To rear a throne more royal than His,
A higher in heaven. Then why should I grovel
to win his grace,
Bow in obedience to Him, when I may be God
as well as He?
Faithful followers back me,
unfailing in battle;
Those hardy heroes have chosen
me for their chief,
Sturdy warriors; with such 'tis well
wars to plan,
Battles to fight, with friends like these,
faithful and true.
Loyal their hearts, their leader I'll be,
Rule in this realm; not right I think it
To fawn upon God for favor and gifts.
Henceforth his liegeman no longer am I!"

When the Almighty heard all this,
How his angel on high, with haughty lips
Defiance uttered, and foolishly strove
To rise against God, . . . He was wroth in His heart, (295)
And cast him down from his seat on high, (300)
Hurled him to hell; from heaven banished,
Down in those deeps he was changed to a devil.
Thus fell the fiend with his followers all;
Three days and nights they downward fell.
Those angels of light the Lord did change
To devils dark. For His deeds and words
They failed to honor, wherefore the Lord
Deprived them of light, and placed them, lost
Deep under earth in darkest hell.

There through the night immeasurably long,
Fire unflagging they feel, each one;
Then comes with the dawn an eastern wind,
And bitter-cold frost,—ever fire or frost.
Throes and hardship are theirs to endure,
Banished from heaven. Their home was changed,
When first the hollow of hell was filled
With fallen fiends. But the faithful angels
Held the heights of heaven above,
While the fiends below in fire lay,
The foes who in folly fought against God.
They have their reward in the womb of hell,
Blaze and broad flames, and bitter smoke,
Glare and gloom. Beguiled by their pride
The service of God they despised and forgot. . (326)
Then spoke the insolent foe (338)
who once was fairest of angels,
Most dazzling in heaven, and dear to his lord;
(Within him sorrow seethed round his heart; (353)
Without was the reek of the rolling flames,
The welter of fire)—such words he spake:

"This narrow place is nothing like
That other world that once we knew,
Where high in heaven our homes were set.
Though God who gave, would not grant us to hold them,
Rule our realm. Unrighteous his deed,
To hurl us flying to this flaming pit,
And the heat of hell, from heaven cut off!
He hath planned to establish man in our place!
This is the sorest of all my sorrows,
That Adam should,—that shape of earth,—
For aye possess my stronghold there,
And live in bliss while we must endure
This brunt of wrath. Ah welaway!
If but my hands were free;
if but an hour I had,
One winter's hour, then would I with this band—!
But iron bonds are all about me;
The rough chain rides me hard, realmless I am.
Hell's strong clutches clamp me down,
Pin me fast, a prey to the flames,
Over and under me endless fire.
I have never looked on a loathlier sight,
Quenchless blaze that quickens ever.
Cables tough, and torturing chains
Hold me here; my hands are shackled,
My feet are fettered; fast I am bound;
I may not pass the portals of hell,
Loose my limbs from the links that hold them,
Hammered hard, of iron hot,
Bars and bolts. Thereby hath God
Gripped my neck. I know from this,
That the Lord of men my mind did mark;
Saw that Adam and I should quarrel
O'er heaven's realm, if my hands were free.
But now we endure the throes of hell,
darkness and heat,

Grim and bottomless. God Himself
Hath swept us into swarthy gloom,
though guiltless of sin!
No wrong we did in his realm,
yet robbed He us all of light;
Cast us into cruellest woe!
now may we wreak our wrongs,
Pay him reward of hate;
because he reft us of light.
He hath marked a place called midgard,
where man He hath wrought
After His likeness. He looks to replace us
In heaven with spotless souls! Now seek we earnestly
How on Adam and all his offspring,
Our wrongs we may right, and wreak our vengeance,
If haply we may beguile him
to go astray from God.
I have no hope of the light
that He will long enjoy;
Of the bliss that is His forever,
'mongst angel-hosts in heaven.
Nor may we hope to soften
the heart of God Almighty.
Then keep we that kingdom from man
since we may come to it never;
Tempt them to break His word,
and turn from the will of their Maker.
Thus shall His wrath be kindled,
to cast them away forever.
Then shall they seek this hell,
sink to these gulfs of horror;
And we shall hold them in chains,
these children of men our vassals.
Think of this deed, ye thanes of mine!
If any there be, whom erst I favored
With gifts of price, in that goodly kingdom,

Where happy we lived and held our realm,
No fitter time he could find, to reward
The bounty I dealt, no better way,
Than if now he were willing at need to escape;
Break through these bars, by boldness and cunning;
Don his feather-robe, fly through the air,
Wheeling aloft till he light on the spot
Where Adam and Eve on earth are standing,
With bounty blessed, while banished we are
To the dark abyss. They are dearer than we
To Heaven's Lord; they live in joy,
They have the wealth that once was ours,
Our realm and our right! This rueth me sore,
That they shall in heaven be happy forever!
If any of you may alter their state,
And make them transgress the command of God, (*429*)
I shall lie at ease in my links of iron. (*433*)
Who gaineth me this shall get his reward,
The best I can give in the bounds of this fire:
He shall sit with myself, who comes to say
They have broken the law of the Lord of heaven."

Then girded himself a foe of God;
A crafty warrior clapped on his pinions;
Set helmet on head, and hardily clasped it;
Firmly fastened it down. He was fluent of speech,
A master of guile. He mounted aloft,
Swung through hell's door, the hardy adventurer,
Wheeling through mid-air, on mischief bent,
Cleaving the flames with his fiendish skill.
He hoped to deceive the servants of God;
Trick them with lies and lead them astray;
Tempt them to rouse the wrath of God.
Onward he flew, with fiendish skill
And came where Adam on earth was standing,
The work of God's hand, wondrously made;

And with him his wife, of women the fairest. (457)
Near by stood two stately trees, (460)
Laden all over with largess of fruit,
Bearing their bounty, as bidden by God,
Heaven's high King, whose hand had set them
For the children of men, to make their choice
Of good and of evil; for each must choose
'Twixt weal and woe. Unlike was their fruit:
One was beautiful, bright and shining,
Delightful to look on; that was life's tree.
Who tasted its fruit, should flourish forever;
Life everlasting his lot should be.
Age might not injure nor dread disease.
His days should pass in pleasure unending,
High in the favor of heaven's King.
And rich reward awaits him hereafter,
In heaven above when hence he departs.

The second tree all swart uptowered,
Dark and dismal: that was Death's tree.
Bitter the fruit it bore unto men!
(Both good and evil must all men know.)
Who tasted the fruit of that fatal tree,
His life should wane and wither away
In sorrow and trouble, in sweat and in toil.
Age would strip him of strength and vigor,
Gladness and glory; his goal is death.
A little while he lingers on earth,
But soon goes down to the darkest of lands,
To serve the fiends in fire and woe,
Hugest of tortures. The tempter knew it,
The sneaking spy with his spite against God.
In the shape of a serpent, he soon was coiled
Round the tree of death, through his devil's craft.
He took of the fruit, and turned to find
The handiwork of heaven's King.

With lying words, the loathly fiend
Came toward the man, and questioned him there:
"Hast thou any longing Adam,
up to God?
I have on his errand hither
fared from far.
'Twas not long since, that I sat with God himself.
He bade me come and tell thee (500)
to take of this fruit. . . .
I heard him approve thy words and deeds, (507)
Praise thy life, in His light above.
Obey the behest that His herald brings!
Boundless stretch Earth's broad green plains.
God sitteth on high, in heaven enthroned,
Nor deigns Himself to suffer the toil
Of this journey long. So the Lord of hosts
His herald doth send, to speak His will.
He bids thee heed and obey His words.
Stretch forth thy hand, and hold this fruit;
Take it and taste it, thy heart will expand,
Thy body grow brighter; thy bounteous Lord
Sends thee this help from heaven above."

Adam answered, where on earth he stood,
God's handiwork: "When I heard the Lord,
The King of heaven, call me aloud,
With stern voice bid me stand on earth,
And obey His will,—when He brought me this woman,
This winsome bride, and bid me beware
Lest the tree of Death should darkly deceive me,
And betray me to woe, He warned me that hell
Should hold him ever, within whose heart
Evil was lurking. . . . Unlike thou seemest (531)
To any angel that ever I saw! (538)
Nor dost thou offer me any token,
That truly from heaven thou hither art sent,

Come from the Lord. I cannot obey thee!
But take thyself off! My trust is in God,
My faith is in Him whose hands did fashion me,
That He may grant me each gift from on high,
Without sending His servant to speak in His place."
Then wrathfully turned the tempter away;
Went where he saw the woman standing,
Winsome and fair. The words he spake
Brought woe to the world, and worst of pangs
To all her offspring, in after years:
"I know ye will rouse the wrath of God,
When I tell him myself, returned from the journey,
The long hard way, that ye would not listen,
Nor heed the message that hither He sent,
Far from the East. He shall fare Himself
To make you His answer; no messenger then
His word will bear, for I wot He will kindle
His anger against you. But if thou, woman,
A willing ear to my words shalt lend,
His vengeance yet thou mayest avert.
Bethink thee, Eve, that through thy wit
Ye both may be saved from bitter woe!
Eat of the fruit, and thine eyes shall be light!
Far and wide o'er the world thou shalt look,
God himself thou shalt see on His throne,
And the favor of Heaven shalt have forever.
Also, dear Eve, thou may'st alter the mind
Of Adam thy husband, if thou have his goodwill,
And he trust thy words, when the truth thou revealest:
How glad was thy heart when God's behest
Thou promptly didst heed: mayhap he will leave
His stubborn mood, and silence the answer
Of wrath in his bosom, if both of us now
Urge him together. Now earnestly ply him
To do thy bidding, lest both of ye fall
Into God's disfavor, and get you His wrath!

If this thou fulfillest, O fairest of women,
I shall hide from my Lord the harsh words of Adam,
The insults thy husband did heap upon me,
When he challenged my honor, charged me with falsehood
Said I was evil, no angel of God.
Yet well do I know all the ways of the angels,
The heavenly mansions. This many a year
With loyal heart my lord I have followed,
And rendered to God, the Ruler of Heaven,
My dutiful service; no devil am I!"

So he led with his lies, and lured with his wiles
The woman to wrong; till the will of the serpent
Worked in her bosom; (the weaker mind
God had given her.) She began to listen
And lean to his lore. At last she took
From the tempter the fruit of the fatal tree,
Against God's word. No worse deed ever
For man was done. 'Twas marvel great
That the Lord everlasting allowed it to happen,
Permitted so many men upon earth
By lying lore to be led astray.
She tasted the fruit and turned from God,
From His word and will. Then wide was her vision
By the gift of the fiend, who beguiled her with lies,
And darkly betrayed her; his doing it was
That heaven and earth more white did seem,
And all the world more wondrous fair,
More glorious-great the works of God.
(She beheld them not by human power,
But the fiend had falsely feigned it before her;
Her sight deceived her, when she seemed to look
So far abroad.) The fiend now spoke,
The tempter-foe,—his tale nought profited:
"Now thou mayst see, I need not tell thee,
How altered thy form, O fairest Eve,

How beauteous thy body, since obeying my words,
And heeding my lore. Now light shines about thee,
Glorious and bright. I brought it from God,
So fair from Heaven, thou mayst feel it and touch it.
Reveal to Adam this vision of brightness,
Vouchsafed by me. If with simple mind
He agree to my wish, I will give him his fill
Of the glorious light I gave to thee,
Nor store up his insolent speeches against him,
Though scarce he deserve so swift a pardon.
Nor shall his children be charged with his fault,
Banished from heaven for his misdoing;
Their life shall be happy, though he hath done wrong."
Then went to Adam of women the fairest,
The winsomest wife the world ever saw,
(Though comely her form, as she came from God's hand
Yet was she undone by darkest wiles
And won by lies), these words she spake: (*630*)
"Adam my lord, this fruit is so sweet, (*655*)
So blithe in my breast, so bright this herald,
This angel of God so good and fair,
By his trappings I see he is sent from above.
'Tis wiser for us to win his favor
Than set him against us by surly words.
If today thou hast uttered aught that was harsh,
He yet will forgive, if he get our obedience.
What profits this strife with the spokesman of God
Thy Lord and Master? We need his good-will,
For he may commend us to our Maker in heaven,
Our Ruler on high. From here I can see
Where He sits himself,—'tis South and East—
Enwound with glory, the world's Creator.
I behold his angels hovering about Him
In winged robes, a radiant host
And choir glad. Whence cometh this vision,
If God Himself vouchsafed it not to us,

The King of heaven? I can hear afar,
And look abroad o'er the bright creation
Joyful harping I hear in heaven!
Filled is my soul, and flooded with light,
Since first I took and tasted this fruit.
Here in my hand, dear husband, I bring it;
Gladly I give it; from God it hath come,
I firmly believe, as his faithful angel
Hath told us it came, in truthful words.
Nought else was ever on earth like this;
'Tis sent by God as his spokesman declares."
Sore she beset him, and spurred him all day
To the deed of darkness; drove him to break
The will of their Lord. The loathly fiend
Stood near by, and subtly the while
Incited their spirits to sin and shame. . . . (687)
Long she urged him, till Adam at last (705)
Goaded by Eve, began to yield;
His mind was turned, he trusted too much
The winning words that the woman spake.
Yet did she it all in duty and love,
Nor weened what woe, what wailing and sorrow
Should come to mankind, because she had hearkened
To the voice of the devil. She deemed she was winning
God's goodwill, by giving her husband
The fruit to taste, and turning his mind
By winsome words, her wish to perform.
Death and the grave he got from the woman,
Though it had not that name,—'twas known as the fruit.
Yet the devil's seduction meant death's long sleep,
Doom of hell and downfall of heroes,
Undoing of man and mortal woe,
Because they ate of that cursed fruit.

As soon as the evil one saw it was done,
He laughed aloud, and leapt for joy.

For the fall of them both, the bitter foe
Gave thanks to his lord, that loathly thane!
"Now have I got me thy grace and favor,
Worked thy will, and won my reward,
Man is betrayed for many a day;
Adam and Eve forever have lost
The love of their Lord, for leaving His word,
His law and command. No more they shall hold
The kingdom of heaven: to hell they shall go.
They shall make the dark journey; no more thy sorrow
Bear in thy breast, where bound thou liest;
Nor mourn in thy mind, that men shall inherit
The heights of heaven, the while we endure
Labor and throes in a land of gloom.
Because of thy pride, our cohorts fell,
Hurled from the towering halls of heaven,
Goodly abodes. For God was wroth
Because we refused to fawn with his followers,
Bow our heads in obeisance to Him.
Therefore the Ruler was wroth in His heart,
Hurled us to hell, in the heat of His anger;
Flung to the flames the flower of His host,
And then with His hands, in heaven He raised
New seats of glory, and gave them to man.
Blithe be thy mood, and merry thy breast!
Double damage today is wrought!
This brood of man hath missed forever
The glory of heaven,—they go their way
To the flames and thee. And God Himself
Is made to suffer sorrow and loss.
On Adam's head 'tis all repaid,
With hate of his Lord and heroes' downfall,
Mortal throes of men upon earth.
Healed is my hurt, my heart expands.
Wreaked are all our ancient wrongs,
The lingering woe we long endured!

Back I'll haste to the blaze of hell,
Satan to seek, struck into chains."
Netherward bent his way that boder of evil,
Stooped to the gulfs of hell and the far-flung flames.

THE DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIANS

(*Exodus*, lines 447-515)

The host was harrowed with horror of drowning;
Sea-death menaced their miserable souls.
The slopes of the hill-sides were splashed with blood.
There was woe on the waters, the waves spat gore;
They were full of weapons, and frothed with slaughter.
Back were beaten the bold Egyptians,
Fled in fear; they were filled with terror.
Headlong they hastened their homes to seek.
Less bold were their boasts as the billows rolled o'er them,
Dread welter of waves. Not one of that army
Went again home, but Wyrd from behind
Barred with billows their backward path.
Where ways had lain, now weltered the sea,
The swelling flood. The storm went up
High to the heavens; hugest of uproars
Darkened the sky; the dying shrieked
With voices doomed. The Deep streamed with blood.
Shield-walls were shattered by shock of the tempest.
Greatest of sea-deaths engulfed the mighty,
Captains and troops. Retreat was cut off
At the ocean's brink. Their battle-shields gleamed
High o'er their heads as the heaped-up waters
Compassed them round, the raging flood.
Doomed was the host, by death hemmed in,
Suddenly trapped. The salty billows

Swept with their swirling the sand from their feet,
As the Ocean cold to its ancient bed,
Through winding channels the churning flood,
Came rolling back o'er the rippled bottom,
Swift avenger, naked and wild.
With slaughter was streaked the storm-dark air;
The bursting deep with blood-terror yawned,
When He who made it, by Moses' hand
Unbitted the wrath of the raging flood;
Wide it came sweeping to swallow the foe;
Foamed the waters, the fated sank;
Earth was o'erwhelmed, the air was darkened;
Burst the wave-walls, the bulwarks tumbled;
The sea-towers melted, when the Mighty One smote
The pride of the host, through the pillar of fire,
With holy hand from heaven above.
The onslaught wild of the angry main
None might oppose. He appointed their end
In the roaring horror. Wroth was the sea:
Up it rose, down it smote, dealing destruction.
Slaughter-blood spread, the sea-wall fell,
Upreared on high, the handiwork of God,
When the ocean He smote with His ancient sword,
Felled the defence of the foam-breasted waves.
With that death-blow deep, the doomed men slept.
The army of sinners their souls gave up,
The sea-pale host, ensnared and surrounded,
When the dark upheaval o'erwhelmed them all,
Hugest of wild waves. The host sank down,
Pharaoh and his folk, the flower of Egypt
Utterly perished. The enemy of God
Soon discovered, when the sea he entered,
That the ocean's master was mightier than he.
By the strength of His arm He decided the battle,
Wrathful and grim. He gave the Egyptians
Thorough reward for that day's work.

Not one of that host to his home came back;
Of all those warriors not one returned
To bring the news of the battle's end,
To tell in the towns the tidings of woe,
Their husbands' doom to the heroes' wives,
How sea-death swallowed the stately host,—
No messenger left. The Lord Almighty
Confounded their boasting; they fought against God.

IV. CHRISTIAN LYRIC

Caedmon

NORTHUMBRIAN HYMN

Now hymn we aloud the Lord of Heaven,
Praise His wisdom and wonderful power,
The glorious works of the great Creator,
How the Father Eternal founded this world.
First He set for the sons of men,
Heaven to roof them. The Holy Ruler,
The King of mankind, then cast the foundations
Of earth in the midst, and made thereafter
Land for the Living, the Lord Almighty.

Cynewulf

HYMN OF PRAISE

(From *The Crist*, lines 348-377)

Hail thou Holy One, Heaven's Ruler,
Thou of old wert equal with the Father,
God in the Highest, in Thy glorious home!
No angel was yet created in heaven,
None of the mighty unnumbered host,
That keep the realms of the kingdom on high,
Worshipping God the Wielder of majesty,
When Thou with the Father didst first establish
The firm foundations of the far-spread world.
Ye share alike the Spirit of Comfort,
Where ye throne on high. We therefore pray Thee
With humble hearts, to help Thy servants.
O Saviour Christ, we call to Thee
To hear the cries of Thy captive people,
Woe-entangled by wayward wills,
Fettered fast by the fiends of hell,
Cast into chains by the crew accursed,
And held in bondage. Our hope is in Thee;
Thou alone canst deliver Thy people.
Help us miserable, by the might of Thy coming!
Comfort us who suffer, and save us disconsolate,
Though we have offended with our faults against Thee.
Have mercy on Thy servants, remember our infirmities
How we fail and falter with feeble hearts
How shamefully we all have erred from Thy ways.
No longer delay, our Lord and Redeemer,
Come and deliver us, O King of Thy people!

We need Thy grace, and the gift of Thy salvation,
That henceforth more worthily we may worship Thy name,
Walk in Thy ways, and Thy will perform.

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE

(From *The Crist*, lines 850-866)

Our life is likest a long sea-voyage:
O'er the water cold in our keels we glide,
O'er Ocean's streams, in our stallions of the deep
We drive afar. 'Tis a dreary waste
Of ceaseless surges we sail across,
In this wavering world, o'er wind-swept tracts
Of open sea. Anxious the struggle,
Ere we bring at last our barks to land,
O'er the rough sea-ridges. Our rescue is near;
The Son of God doth safely guide us,
Helps us in to our harbor of refuge;
Shows from the deck the sheltered waters
Where smoothly to anchor our ancient chargers,
Hold with the hawsers our horses of the deep.
Then fix we our hope on that haven of safety
That the Prince of Glory prepared for us all,
The Ruler on high, when He rose to heaven.

DOOMSDAY

(From *The Crist*, lines 867-1006)

Lo! on a sudden, and all unlooked for,
In the dead of the night, the day of the Lord
Shall break tremendous on man and beast,
O'erwhelming the world and the wide creation,

As a ruthless robber, ranging at night,
Who strides through the dark with stealthy pace,
And suddenly springs on sleep-bound heroes,
Greets with violence his victims unguarded.

A mighty host on the mount of Sion
Shall gather together glad and rejoicing
The faithful of the Lord, they shall find their reward.

With one accord from the quarters four,
And uttermost ends of the earth at once,
Glorious angels together shall blow
Their shattering trumpets; the trembling earth
Shall shake and sink, as they sound together,
Piercing strong to the starry track.
Their music swells from the South and North,
From East and from West, o'er the world's wide round.
They wake from the dead to the day of judgement
The children of men, with their challenge dread.
Out of their ancient earth and mold,
Forth from their sleep profound they wake them.
Howling with fear they shall huddle and flock,
Moaning and groaning, aghast with terror,
Bewailing the deeds that were done in the body.

Eye hath not seen a sight more awful,
To men shall appear no portent more dread:
Sinners and saints in strange confusion,
Mingled together shall mount from their graves,
The bright and the black: for both shall arise,
Some fair, some foul, as foreordained
To different home, of devils or angels.

From South and East o'er Sion's top,
In sudden radiance the sun shall flame
From the throne of God; more gleaming-bright,

Than man may imagine, or mind conceive.
Resplendent it shines, as the Son of God
Dazzling breaks through the dome of heaven.
Glorious appears the presence of Christ,
The King as He comes through the clouds in the East,
Merciful and mild in mind to his own,
But with altered mood of anger toward the wicked:
Unlike His looks for the lost and the blest. . . . (*909*)

The greedy spirit of consuming flame (*972*)
Shall leap o'er the land, and the lofty halls;
With the terror of fire shall fill the world.
The battle-thirsty flame shall blaze afar,
Devouring the earth, and all therein.
Strong-built walls shall split and crumble;
Mountains shall melt, and the mighty cliffs
That buttress the earth 'gainst battering waves,
Bulwarks upreared 'gainst the rolling billows,
Shall fall on a sudden. The sweep of the fire
Shall leave no bird nor beast alive.
The lurid flame shall leap along the world
Like a raging warrior. Where the waters flowed
In a bath of fire the fish shall be stifled;
Sundered from life, their struggles over,
The monsters of the deep no more shall swim.
Like molten wax the water shall burn.
More marvels shall appear than mind may conceive,
When tempest and whirlwind o'erwhelm the earth,
And rocks are riven by the roaring blast.
Men shall wail, they shall weep and lament,
Groan aghast with grovelling fear.
The smoke-dark flame o'er the sinful shall roll,
The blaze shall consume their beakers of gold,
All the ancient heirlooms of kings.
The shrieks of the living aloud shall resound
Mid the crack of doom, their cry of fear,

Their howl of despair, as they struggle to hide.
No guilty wretch shall refuge find,
Not one shall escape the scorching flame;
On all it shall seize, as it sweeps through the world.
It shall leap and run and ruthlessly bore
In the bowels of the earth, it shall burn aloft,
Till the ancient stains of earthly sin
By the purging billows are burnt away.

THE VISION OF THE CROSS

(Ascribed to Cynewulf)

List to the words of a wondrous vision,
Dream that I dreamt in the dead of night,
When stilled in sleep were the sons of men!
Methought on a sudden I saw a cross
Upreared in the sky, and radiant with light.
Brightest of trees, that beauteous beacon
Was dipped in gold, and bedight with jewels:
Four at the base, and five on the beam
Glistened on high; 'twas no gallows-tree,
Emblem of shame, but the souls of the blest
Were gazing upon it, God's bright angels,
The glorious creation, all kindreds of men.
'Twas a tree of triumph, but troubled was I,
Stained with sin, as I stood and gazed
On the Cross of glory, aglow with light.
Layers of gold, and glittering jewels
Covered its bark, and buried the wood.
Still through the gold that garnished its side,
I was 'ware of wounds where once it had bled,
Scars of a battle old. I was bowed with sorrow;
But the vision filled me with fear when I saw
That it changed its hue—now chased with gold,
Now stained with blood and streaming wet!

Long I lay thus, looking in sadness
At the Saviour's Cross, when sudden I heard it
Making melody, marked it singing;
Wondrous words the wood did utter:
"Many years ago,
—yet I remember it all—
Fast by a forest-side,
they felled me where I grew,
Severed me from my stock;
strong foes took and shaped me
For a spectacle to men;
made me bear their criminals,
Bore me away on their backs,
bade me stand on a hill-top,
Band of fiends there fixed me.
I saw the Friend of Man,
Haste with mighty hardihood
to mount on high and clasp me.
I durst not bend nor falter,
nor disobey my Lord;
Though I marked how all the earth
with mighty tremblings shook.
The fiends I might have felled there,
but firm I stood unshaken.
Then stripped the mighty hero,
in sooth 'twas God Almighty.
He clomb the towering cross,
with spirit keen and daring;
Bold in sight of the rabble,
when our race he would deliver.
I trembled as he embraced me,
yet bow to earth I durst not,
Nor prostrate fall with fear.
'Stand fast,' my Lord commanded;
I stood, a cross uplifted!
the King of glory I carried,

Upheld the Lord of heaven;
my head I durst not bow.
With gruesome nails they gored me,
the gaping wounds are open;
In bitter malice scarred me,
strike back at the fiends I durst not.
They mocked us both and beat us,
with blood my sides were running,
That flowed from the Saviour's body,
when he bowed his head in death.

Much I endured on that mount of woe,
Throes and hate, for there I beheld
The God of hosts, hanging outstretched.
pall of darkness dimmed his glory,
Shrouded his body. The shadow rushed on,
Black under clouds, all creatures wailed;
Christ was on the Cross; their King was dead!

Soon a band I beheld,
hastening swiftly forward,
Comrades seeking their Lord;
(clearly I saw it all.)
Stricken with grief profound,
forward I stooped to help them,
Eagerly bending low.
They lifted Him down from the Cross,
Released from his bitter agony;
alone they left me there,
Standing steeped in blood,
wounded with shafts of malice.
They folded His weary limbs,
and watched at the head of his body;
Looked intent on their Lord,
the while He took His rest,
Forspent with heavy toil.

Then full in sight of His slayers
They hastened to hollow a grave,
hewn from glistening marble;
Buried the Lord of Victory,
and chanted a lay of mourning,
Sadly at eventide;
then sorrowing took their leave;
Went from the Lord of glory.
There He rested alone.

Long I stood, deserted by all; (*70*)
At last they felled me,—fearful my fate;
They dug a ditch, and deep they buried me.
Erelong I was found by friends of my Lord, (*76*)
Who straightway adorned me with silver and gold.
Here mayest thou learn, my hero beloved,
What woe I endured, what work of felons,
What trials sore. Now the time is come
That far and wide o'er the world I am honored.
All kindreds of men, the mighty creation,
Kneel to this sign. For the Son of God
On me did suffer! This makes me glory!
Sublime I am lifted aloft in the sky,
With might to heal all men who adore me.
Once I was set for a sign of woe,
A mark of shame, ere I showed to men,
Wandering lost, the way of life.
God who is Lord of glory, exalted me
High o'er the towering trees of the forest.". . . (*91*)

With happy heart I hailed the cross, (*122*)
And fervent zeal. No friend was near;
Alone I knelt. I longed to depart;
My soul was eager to start on her journey.
Late I had lingered, my life's desire
Was to come to the cross, the conqueror's beacon:

More oft than other men, ever alone,
To worship it worthily, wanting but this:
To look on the cross whence cometh my help.
Friends have I few to defend and comfort me;
They have left the life and delight of the world;
They have gone to greet the King of glory;
They are folded in bliss with the Father on high;
They live in the light of the Lord of angels;
My heart beats high for the happy day
When the cross of Christ shall come once more
To fetch me away from this fleeting life,
Bring me home to the bliss of heaven,
Where the saints of God sit at the feast,
Joined in raptures of joy eternal. (*144*)

May he who suffered for the sins of men (*145-156*)
On the cross of shame, show me the way,
Guide me in grace to the goal of my hope,
That so I may join the saints in their joy,
And dwell forever in realms of bliss.

THE PHŒNIX

(Ascribed to Cynewulf)

Lo, I have heard of a happy land
Far in the East, of a fair country,
Happier fairer than earth-folk know.
Far remote the mighty Creator
Planted this realm, where few may reach it;
Sinful mortals seek it in vain.
Blest are those fields, abloom with the fragrance
Of all sweet odors that earth exhales.
Peerless the island, peerless her maker,
Glorious the Lord who laid her foundations.

Her happy people hear glad singing,
Oft through Heaven's open door.
Green are her woodlands, green and ample,
Under her rainless roof outspread.
Winter's breath or blast of fire,
Driving hail or hoar-frost dreary,
Heat of sun or cold incessant,
Scorching noons or sleeting north-winds
Ne'er may harm this happy island.
Blest it lies, abloom with flowers.
Ever the same through the seasons' change.
No mountain ramparts mar those regions;
No rugged heights, as here with us;
No hill-sides steep, or hollows deep;
No crags or clefts, no caves or dens;
But smoothest lawns and sunny levels
Of joyful flowers face those skies.
Fathoms twelve the fair land towers
(So wise men have writ in records old)
O'er the loftiest peak that lifts its head,
Here among us, up to the skies.

'Tis a region calm of sunny groves
Woodlands glad, whose wondrous trees
Stand fair and fresh in unfading hues,
Goodly and green at God's behest.
Ever the same, summer and winter,
In living green those groves are clad,
Laden with fruit. No leaf shall waste
No branch be blackened with blast of lightning
Till doomsday come. When the deluge swept
With might of waters the world of men,
And the flood o'erwhelmed the whole of earth,
This isle withstood the storm of billows
Serene and steadfast 'mid raging seas
Spotless and pure by the power of God.

Thus blest it abides till the bale-fire come,
The day of doom when death's dark chambers,
Abodes of shade, shall be broken asunder.
No envious strife disturbs that isle;
No tears or toil or trace of woe;
Needy age, or narrow death;
Foe's assault, or sudden end;
No sin or sorrow, or sore distress;
No grinding want, or wealth uncertain,
No bitter care, or bed of pain;
No wintry weather's wild encounter
Of crashing storms, no cruel frost
Beats any man there with icy showers.
No sleet or snow assails that isle;
No pelting rains pour from the clouds,
Lashed by the gale; but living streams
Wondrously gush from woodland springs,
Lapping the earth with limpid ripples.
Each month of the year in the midmost grove
The winsome waters well sea-cold
From the mossy turf; at the time appointed
Wind through the wood in wandering streams.
For God decreed that the joy of waters
Should twelve times play through that land of plenty.
Thick hangs the fruit in the forest-glades;
The shining clusters never decay,
The holy burden of the bending trees.
No withered blooms are wafted down;
No leaves are shed; but laden boughs
Of bounteous ever-bearing trees
Yield ever-fresh and fragrant fruit.
Green are the groves on the grassy sward
Decked and adorned by the deed of God,
In beauty unwasting. Through the woodlands bright
A holy fragrance floats and hovers.
Changeless through ages the isle shall remain,

Till He that uplifted the land at the first
Shall end his wisdom's ancient work.

A glorious bird guardeth this grove,
Noble in flight, Phœnix by name.
Alone in the land he liveth, a hermit;
Proudly dwelleth, proof against death,
In this wood of delight, while the world endures.
'Tis said he watches the way of the sun,
Eager to greet the candle of God,
The gleaming gem, and joyously waits
Till the Day-star come at dawn from the east,
Shining bright o'er the billowy sea,
First of lights by the Father created,
Glorious sign of God. When the stars are gone,
Dipped in the waves of the western sea,
Or hid in the dawn, and dusky night
Darkling departs, then poised for flight
The strong-winged Phœnix scans the ocean,
Sky and wave, and waits the time
When the glorious light shall glide from the east
And radiant rise o'er the rounding sea.
This peerless bird abides by the fountain,
Haunting ever the hallowed streams.
Twelve times bathes in the bubbling spring,
Dipping his plumes ere day arrive,
And the twinkle of dawn; so oft he tastes
The waters that well sea-cold, and wets
His beak at each bath in the bourne of delight.
Then after his water-play wings him triumphant
Aloft to a tree-top towering high,
Whence in the east he may easily see
The road of the sun, when rising clear,
The lamp of heaven shall glitter and gleam
O'er the welter of waves. The world is brightened,
In beauty glows, as the glorious gem

Flashes o'er ocean, inland afar,
Lordly day-star lighting the earth.
As soon as the sun o'er the salty streams
On high doth soar, the haughty bird
Joyfully leaves his lofty perch,
Darting upward on dauntless wing
And singing exultant, seeks the light.
Glorious the greeting he giveth the sun,
His spirit athrill with rapture of bliss;
Warbling melodies wondrous sweet,
With various art and voice more clear
Than ever men heard the heavens beneath,
Since the King of Glory, the great Creator,
Established the world. More winsome far
Than any music that men may make;
And sweeter than any earthly strain,
This trancing song. No sound of trump
Or horn or harp; or harmonies clear
Of organ-pipes; or purest tones
Of mortal voice, or music of the swan,
Or aught that God hath given to cheer
Earth's heavy toil, may touch this song.
He carols and sings in unceasing delight
Till the sun descends in the southern sky;
Then sinketh his song and silent falls.
The beautiful bird then bows his head
And listening alert lifteth his wings
Beating them thrice, then bideth at rest.
Ever he notes the turn of the hours
Twelve times by day and twelve times by night.

The lord of this grove hath leave to enjoy
At his will the wealth of this wondrous isle.
Life and delight in a land of plenty,
Until he is worn with winters a thousand
Of life upon earth, alone in the wood.

Then aged and wise with the weight of years
Hovers on high the hoary-plumed Phœnix,
Leaves the green island and flowering plains,
Wingeth his flight to a wide-spreading realm,
A lonely and uninhabited land.
There he inherits a kingdom mighty;
Bold o'er the bird-tribes beareth rule;
Lives for a season, and lords it among them,
Glorious grown, and guardeth the realm.
But soon he departs on swiftest pinions,
Westward winging his wondrous flight;
Thick the bird-tribes throng round their leader,
Each of them eager to aid their lord.
At length he comes to the coast of Syria,
With his countless hörde. Then harshly thrusting
The throng away, he wheels him aside;
Seeketh a dense wood's deepest shelter
To hide from the crowd in the covert dark.
Tall in the grove a great tree towers,
Firmly rooted 'neath heaven's roof,
Named from the bird, and known as the Phœnix.
The Maker of man, the mighty Creator,
Hath granted a glorious growth to this tree.
I have heard that it passes in height by far
The tallest tree that towers on earth;
Its foliage fair shall flourish and thrive;
Blight shall not touch it, its branches shall wave,
Winsome and green while the world endures.

When winds are laid and weather is calm,
The lamp of heaven shines holy and pure;
Clouds are scattered and skies are clear;
The mighty surge of the sea is stilled;
Storms are asleep and warm in the south
Gleams the sun and gladdens the world.
Then begins the bird to build in the branches,

To furnish his nest for his hour of need,
When his spirit's fervor shall urge him to change
The years of his age, restoring his youth,
And renewing his life. From near and far
He gathers together the goodliest herbs;
Blossoms and leaves he brings from the wood;
Fills with fragrance his forest-abode;
Culls each sweet that the King of glory,
The Father, created o'er earth's wide realm,
To charm and delight the children of men.
So he collects the loveliest blossoms;
Treasures bright he brings to the tree.
Soon in the solitude's deep recess
A winsome bower the wild bird builds him,
A home in the tree-top; and houses him there,
High aloft in the leafy shade;
Surrounds himself with richest spices,
Herbs the rarest that earth may yield;
Makes for his body a bed of blossoms,
Fain to depart. With folded pinions
He watcheth on high and awaiteth his hour.
When overhead the sun in summer
Out of heaven hottest shines,
The scathing heat scorches his house;
The blossoms are warmed; the bower smokes
With incense sweet, and bursts into flame;
Bird and nest are burned together:
The blaze is kindled, the bale-fire wraps
In roaring flames his wretched abode,
And fiercely feeds on the Phœnix hoar,
Ancient of years. His aged body
Is prey to the flames: his fleeting spirit,
Hastes to its doom, when the hot blast sunders
Flesh from bone. Yet the breath of life
In the fulness of time returneth again.
Soon as the flickering flame subsides,

The ashes are knit and kneaded together:
When the beautiful nest is burnt to a cinder,
And body and bones of the bird are crumbled,
In the waning glow of the whitening embers
A ball is found, in the bed of ashes
Rolled together, round like an apple;
Out of it comes a curious creature,
Wondrous in hue, as though it were hatched,
Shining bright, from the shell of an egg.
It grows in the shade to the shape of an eaglet,
A nestling fair, then further increases,
Lustily thriving, larger still,
Equalling soon an eagle in size.
At length he is fledged with feathers gay,
Bright as of old with beauteous plumes,
His body renewed by the birth of fire,
Taint of evil all taken away.
Like as when men in the month of harvest
Gather for food the fruits of the earth;
Garner their crops 'gainst coming of winter;
Shelter and shield them from showers and storms,
Laying in stores and living in plenty,
While roaring winter rages amain,
And covers the fields with coat of snow:
Out of those winter-stores, wealth abounding
Shall come through the germ of life in the corn,
Cleanly sown as a seed in the spring.
When the sun returns, the token of life,
And his warm rays waken the wealth of the world,
Sprouteth afresh each fruit of the earth,
Each in its own kind quickened and kindled
To brighten the field. So the Phœnix old
After many years his youth renews;
Is girt again with a garment of flesh.
Earthly food he refuseth to touch,
Save that he drinketh drops of honey-dew

That often fall at midnight hour;
Tasting nought else until he revisit
His own abode and ancient home. (*264*)

. . . . . .

A man of God, with mind prophetic, (*570*)
Sang of old, a song inspired;
Foretold his rising to life eternal.
That we more readily might read the meaning
Of the fate of the Phœnix,—his fiery death:
When he brings away his body's remnant;
Gathers the ashes and embers together,
Clasped in his claws, and carries them off,
Flying sunward, when the flame subsides,
To the courts of the Lord, where he lives secure
Through countless years, all young again.
No foe infests that fair domain;
No hardship there can harm him further.
Thus body and soul, by the Saviour's might
Joined after death, shall journey together
To the land of delight, laden with savor
Of incense sweet, like the soaring Phœnix,
Where high o'er the hosts, in the city of glory,
The Sun of Righteousness radiant streams.

When the Saviour Christ on the souls of the Blest
Shines from on high, toward heaven's gate
They mount, like beautiful birds, to meet him;
Glad is the song and glorious the shape
Of the spirits-elect in that land of joy,
Where envy and malice no more shall touch them:
For ever and ever from evil free,
They live in peace, apparelled in light,
Girt with glory, by God defended,
Like the Phœnix wondrous. The works of each,
Sun-like gleam and glow in splendor,
Bright before the face of the Lord,

In clear abodes of blessed calm.
The crown of glory glittering bright,
Studded round with rarest jewels,
Decks the brow of each blessed saint.
The radiance floods their foreheads shining;
God's diadem adorns the righteous
With jewelled light. They live in joy
Endless, immortal, and ever renewed,
In bliss secure and clothed in beauty;
At home with the Father of angels in heaven.
No sorrow haunts those happy mansions;
No danger, dread, nor days of toil;
No parching thirst, nor pangs of hunger;
No need, nor age; the noble King
Dispenseth bounty; the spirit-host
Praise their Redeemer, the Prince of Heaven;
Honor and magnify the might of the Lord;
Shouting glad, that glorious company
Surround on high God's holy throne;
Saints and angels sing triumphant,
Worshipping God with one accord:
"Peace be to Thee true God! Power and Wisdom!
Thanks to Thee evermore, throned in majesty,
For the gifts Thy grace doth grant us anew,
Boundless in might, dominion and glory,
High and holy! The heavens above,
Abode of the angels, and the earth also,
Father Almighty, are full of thy majesty;
Thou Glory of Glories, and greatest of kings!
Defend us Creator, Thou Father Almighty,
And Ruler of Heaven, who reignest on high."
Thus hymn aloud the host of the righteous,
Cleansed from guilt, in the glorious city;
Publish the praise of the Prince of Heaven;
The choir of saints keep singing on high:
"To Him alone belongeth all honor

Thanksgiving and worship, world without end!
Never His glory hath known a beginning,
Though He chose to be born a child upon earth,
Here among men, yet the might of His power
High o'er the Heavens in Holiness dwelt
In glory undimmed. Though death's sharp pang
He bore on the cross, and bitter woe,
The third day after the throes of his passion
Laid low his body, He was brought to life
By the Father's grace. So the Phœnix stands
For a sign of the power of the Son of God,
When he wakes to the life of life from his ashes,
Girt with limbs in the glory of youth.
Thus by the sundring of soul and body,
To life everlasting our Lord did help us,
Even as the Phœnix, eager for flight,
Loadeth his wings with winsome herbs,
And sweetest blossoms that bloom upon earth."

Such is the burden, as scriptures tell us,
The songs of the saints whose souls have departed
On the heavenward journey, to the joy of joys
And the God of grace. For a gift to the Lord
They bring a sweet-smelling savor on high
Of words and works, in that world of bliss
And radiant life. Render to Him
Praise and Honor, Power and Glory;
Worship and Wisdom, World without end,
In heaven above. He only is King
Of earth's wide round, and the realms of light,
With splendor girt in that glorious city.
Leave hath granted us *lucis auctor,*
That here we might *merueri;*
By good deeds gain *gaudia in celo;*
That so we men *maxima regna*
Might reach, and sit *sedibus altis;*

Live in delight *lucis et pacis;*
Enter our home *almæ letitiæ;*
In bliss immortal, *blandem et mitem*
See our Saviour *sine fine;*
Prolong his praises *laude perenne,*
In bliss with the Angels. *Alleluia.*

V. SECULAR LYRIC AND ELEGY

THE WANDERER

Many a lonely man at last comes to honor
Merits God's mercy, though much he endured
On wintry seas, with woe in his heart,
Dragging his oar through drenching-cold brine,
Homeless and houseless and hunted by Wyrd.

These are the words of a way-faring wanderer,
This is his song of the sorrow of life,
Slaughter of foemen, felling of kinsmen:

Often alone in the dark before dawning,
All to myself my sorrow I tell.
Friend have I none to whom I may open
My heart's deep secret, my hidden spring of woe.
Well do I know 'tis the way of the high-born,
Fast in his heart to fetter his feelings,
Lock his unhappiness in the hold of his mind.
Spirit that sorrows withstandeth not destiny,
Heart that complaineth plucketh no help.
A haughty hero will hide his suffering,
Manfully master misery's pang.
Thus stricken with sorrow, stript of my heritage,
Far from kinsmen and country and friends,

Grimly I grappled my grief to my bosom,
Since long time ago, my giver of bounty
Was laid in the earth, and left me to roam
Watery wastes, with winter in my heart.
Forsaken I sought a shielder and protector;
Far and near I found none to greet the wanderer,
No master to make him welcome in his wine-hall;
None to cheer the cheerless, or the friendless to befriend.

He who has lost all his loved companions
Knoweth how bitter a bedfellow is sorrow.
Loneliness his lot, not lordly gold,
Heart-chilling frost, not harvest of plenty.
Oft he remembers the mirth of the mead-hall,
Yearns for the days of his youth, when his dear lord
Filled him with abundance. Faded are those joys!
He shall know them no more; no more shall he listen
To the voice of his lord, his leader and counsellor.
Sometimes sleep and sorrow together
Gently enfold the joyless wanderer:
Bright are his dreams, he embraces his lord again,
Kisses his liege, and lays on his knee
Head and hands as in happy days,
When he thanked for a boon his bountiful giver.

Wakes with a start the homeless wanderer;
Nought he beholds but the heaving surges,
Seagulls dipping and spreading their wings,
Scurries of snow and the scudding hail.
Then his heart is all the heavier,
Sore after sweet dreams sorrow reviveth.
Fain would he hold the forms of his kinsmen,
Longingly leans to them, lovingly greets them;
Slowly their faces swim into distance;
No familiar greeting comes from the fleeting
Companies of kinsmen. Care ever shadows

The way of the traveller, whose track is on the waters,
Whose path is on the billows of the boundless deep.

Surely I see not how I should keep
My heart from sinking, heavy with sorrow,
When all life's destiny deeply I ponder,—
Men that are suddenly snatched in their prime,
High-souled heroes; so the whole of this earth
Day by day droopeth and sinketh to decay. . . (*63*)
How dread is the doom of the last desolation, (*73*)
When all the wealth of the world shall be waste,
He that is wise may learn, if he looks
Abroad o'er this land, where lonely and ruinous,
Wind-swept walls, waste are standing;
Tottering towers, crusted with frost,
Crumbling wine-halls, bare to the sky.
Dead is their revelry, dust are the revellers!
Some they have fallen on far fields of battle,
Some have gone down in ships on the sea;
Some were the prey of the prowling gray-wolf,
Some by their loved ones were laid in the earth.
The Lord of the living hath levelled their mansions,
Silenced the sound of the singing and laughter.
Empty and bare are all their habitations,
Wondrous works of the giants of old.

He that considers this scene of desolation,
And this dark life deeply doth ponder,—
Battle and blood-shed, burning and slaughter,
It bringeth to mind, and mournfully he asks:
Where is the warrior, where is the war-horse?
Where is the giver of bounty, where are the boon-companions,
The "dream and the gleam" that gladdened the hall?
Alas the bright ale-cup, alas the brave warrior!
Alas the pride of princes! Their prime is no more;

Sunk under night's shadow, as though it never had been!
Where lusty warriors thronged, this lone wall towers,
Weird with dragon-shapes, wondrously carven;
Storm of ash-spears hath stricken the heroes,
Blood-thirsty weapons, Wyrd the supreme.
Wintry blasts now buffet these battlements;
Dreary snow-storms drift up the earth,
The terror of winter when wild and wan
Down from the north with the darkness drives
The ruinous scourge of the ruthless hail.

All this life is labor and sorrow,
Doom of destiny darkens o'er earth.
Wealth is fleeting, friends are fleeting,
Man is fleeting, maid is fleeting,
All this earth's foundations utterly shall pass. (*110*)

THE SEA-FARER

The poem translated below, has been interpreted as a dialogue between a weather-beaten old sailor and a youth eager to go to sea. The parts are not assigned in the original MS., and the only warrant for our dialogue form lies in the structure of the poem itself.

The Old Sailor:

True is the tale that I tell of my travels,
Sing of my sea-faring sorrows and woes;
Hunger and hardship's heaviest burdens,
Tempest and terrible toil of the deep,
Daily I've borne on the deck of my boat.
Fearful the welter of waves that encompassed me,
Watching at night on the narrow bow,
As she drove by the rocks, and drenched me with spray.
Fast to the deck my feet were frozen,

Gripped by the cold, while care's hot surges
My heart o'erwhelmed, and hunger's pangs
Sapped the strength of my sea-weary spirit.

Little he knows whose lot is happy,
Who lives at ease in the lap of the earth,
How, sick at heart, o'er icy seas,
Wretched I ranged the winter through,
Bare of joys, and banished from friends,
Hung with icicles, stung by hail-stones.
Nought I heard but the hollow boom
Of wintry waves, or the wild swan's whoop.
For singing I had the solan's scream;
For peals of laughter, the yelp of the seal;
The sea-mew's cry, for the mirth of the mead-hall.
Shrill through the roar of the shrieking gale
Lashing along the sea-cliff's edge,
Pierces the ice-plumed petrel's defiance,
And the wet-winged eagle's answering scream.

Little he dreams that drinks life's pleasure,
By danger untouched in the shelter of towns
Insolent and wine-proud, how utterly weary
Oft I wintered on open seas.
Night fell black, from the north it snowed
Harvest of hail.

The Youth:

Oh wildly my heart
Beats in my bosom and bids me to try
The tumble and surge of seas tumultuous,
Breeze and brine and the breakers' roar.
Daily hourly drives me my spirit
Outward to sail, far countries to see.
Liveth no man so large in his soul,
So gracious in giving, so gay in his youth,

In deeds so daring, so dear to his lord,
But frets his soul for his sea-adventure,
Fain to try what fortune shall send.
Harping he heeds not, nor hoarding of treasure;
Nor woman can win him, nor joys of the world.
Nothing doth please but the plunging billows;
Ever he longs, who is lured by the sea.
Woods are abloom, the wide world awakens,
Gay are the mansions, the meadows most fair;
These are but warnings, that haste on his journey
Him whose heart is hungry to taste
The perils and pleasures of the pathless deep.

The Old Sailor:

Hearest the cuckoo mournfully calling?
The summer's watchman sorrow forbodes.
What does the landsman that wantons in luxury,
What does he reck of the rough sea's woe,
The cares of the exile, whose keel has explored
The uttermost parts of the Ocean-ways!

The Youth:

Sudden my soul starts from her prison-house,
Soareth afar o'er the sounding main;
Hovers on high, o'er the home of the whale;
Back to me darts the bird-sprite and beckons,
Winging her way o'er woodland and plain,
Hungry to roam, and bring me where glisten
Glorious tracts of glimmering foam.
This life on land is lingering death to me,
Give me the gladness of God's great sea. [66]

THE HUSBAND'S MESSAGE

An exile from his country sends to his wife overseas a message, bidding her join him in his new home where he has prospered. The letters are cut on a tablet of wood, and the wood itself is supposed to speak. Compare the Vision of the Cross, and the Riddles for this kind of dramatic personification.

See I bring thee a secret message!
A sapling once in the woods I grew;
I was cut for a stave and covered with writing;
Skilled men cunningly carved upon me
Letters fair, in a faraway land.
Since have I crossed the salt-streams often,
Carried in ships to countries strange;
Sent by my lord, his speech to deliver
In many a towering mead-hall high.
Hither I've sped, the swift keel brought me,
Trial to make of thy trust in my master;
Look thou shalt find him loyal and true.

He told me to come, that carved this letter,
And bid thee recall, in thy costly array,
The pledges ye plighted, the promises true
Ye gave to each other in days of old,
When still in the land ye lived together,
Happily mated, and held in the mead-halls
Your home and abode. A bitter feud
Banished him far. He bids me call thee,
Earnestly urge thee overseas.
When thou hast heard, from the brow of the hill,
The mournful cuckoo call in the wood,
Let no man living delay thy departure,
Hinder thy going, or hold thee at home.
Away to the sea, where the gulls are circling!

Board me a ship that's bound from the shore:
Sail away South, to seek thy own husband:
Over the water he waits for thee.

No keener joy could come to his heart,
No greater happiness gladden his soul,
Than if God who wieldeth the world, should grant
That ye together should yet give rings,
Treasure of gold to trusty liegemen.
A home he hath found in a foreign land,
Fair abode and followers true,
Hardy heroes, though hence he was driven;
Shoved his boat from the shore in distress,
Steered for the open, sped o'er the ocean,
Weary wave-tossed wanderer he.

Past are his woes, he has won through his perils,
He lives in plenty, no pleasure he lacks;
Nor horses nor goods nor gold of the mead-hall;
All the wealth of earls upon earth
Belongs to my lord, he lacks but thee.

VI. RIDDLES AND GNOMIC VERSE

THE BOOK-WORM

A moth ate a word! To me that seemed
A strange thing to happen, when I heard that
wonder,—
A worm that would swallow the speech of a man,
Sayings of strength steal in the dark,
Thoughts of the mighty; yet the thieving sprite
Was none the wiser for the words he had eaten!

GNATS

There's a troop of tiny folk travelling swift,
Brought by the breeze o'er the brink of the hill,
Buzzing black-coated bold little people,—
Noisy musicians; well-known is their song.
They scour the thickets, but sometimes invade
The rooms of the town. Now tell me their names.

THE SHIELD

Wounded I am, and weary with fighting;
Gashed by the iron, gored by the point of it,
Sick of battle-work, battered and scarred.
Many a fearful fight have I seen, when
Hope there was none, or help in the thick of it,
Ere I was down and foredone in the fray.
Offspring of hammers, hardest of battle-blades,
Smithied in forges, fell on me savagely,
Doomed to bear the brunt and the shock of it,
Fierce encounter of clashing foes.
Leech cannot heal my hurts with his simples,
Salves for my sores have I sought in vain.
Blade-cuts dolorous, deep in the side of me,
Daily and nightly redouble my wounds.

BARNACLE ON THE HULL OF A SAILING-VESSEL

(OR BARNACLE-GOOSE)

I'm found under water held fast by my mouth,
Swirl of the sea-tides goes sweeping beneath me.
Fathom-deep sunk under surges I grew.
Bending roof of billows above me:

My body adrift on a floating beam.
You'll find me alive if you lift me and free me.
Dull is my coat as I come from the deep,
But straight I am decked with streamers of white,
Bright when the freshening breeze brings me from underseas
Heaves me up and urges me far
O'er the seal-bath salty. Say what I'm called.

HONEY-MEAD

I'm prized by men, in the meadows I'm found,
Gathered on hill-sides and hunted in groves;
From dale and from down by day I am brought.
Airy wings carry me, cunningly store me,
Hoarding me safe. Yet soon men take me;
Drained into vats, I'm dangerous grown.
I tie up my victim, and trip him, and throw him;
Often I floor a foolish old churl.
Who wrestles with me, and rashly would measure
His strength against mine, will straightway find himself
Flung to the ground, flat on his back,
Unless he leave his folly in time,
Put from his senses and power of speech,
Robbed of his might, bereft of his mind,
Of his hands and feet. Now find me my name,
Who can bind and enslave men so upon earth,
And bring fools low in broad daylight.

THE ANCHOR

I war with the wind, with the waves I wrestle;
I must battle with both when the bottom I seek,
My strange habitation by surges o'er-roofed.
I am strong in the strife, while still I remain;
As soon as I stir, they are stronger than I.

They wrench and they wrest, till I run from my foes;
What was put in my keeping they carry away.
If my back be not broken, I baffle them still;
The rocks are my helpers, when hard I am pressed;
Grimly I grip them. Guess what I'm called.

THE PLOUGH

My beak is below, I burrow and rose
Under the ground. I go as I'm guided
By my master the farmer, old foe of the forest;
Bent and bowed, at my back he walks,
Forward pushing me over the field;
Sows on my path where I've passed along.
I came from the wood, a wagon carried me;
I was fitted with skill, I am full of wonders.
As grubbing I go, there's green on one side,
But black on the other my path is seen.
A curious prong pierces my back;
Under me hangs another in front,
And forward pointing is fixed to my head.
I tear and gash the ground with my teeth
If my master steer me with skill from behind.

GNOMIC VERSES

(From the Cotton MS.)

The king shall rule his kingdom; castles are seen from afar,
Reared by giants they rise in the land,
Wondrous walls of masonry. Wind is swiftest aloft;
Far is the thunder heard. Fair are the glories of Christ.
Wyrd is strongest, Winter is coldest,
Lent is hoariest, 'tis latest cold.
Harvest is merriest, to men it brings
Fruits of the year, furnished by God.

Truth is plainest. Treasure is dearest,
Gold to the children of men. Gray hairs are wisest:
Who longest hath lived hath learned the most.
Troubles shall cleave. Clouds shall dissolve.
Comrades good shall encourage an ætheling
To be brave in the fight, and free of his gold.
Earls shall be daring. Iron shall ring
Against helmet in battle. Hooded, the falcon
Shall keep his wildness. Wolf in the forest
Shall outlaw be. Boar in the thicket
Shall tear with his tusks. Trusty earl
To praise shall aspire. Spear for the hand,
Gold-adorned javelin. Jewel in ring
Shall richly be set. River with sea
Shall mingle its stream. Mast in the ship,
Sail on the yard, sword in the breast
Iron that is doughty. Dragon in the cave
Fierce o'er his treasure. Fish in the water
Shall spawn its kind. King in the hall
Shall bracelets bestow. Bear on the heath
Surly shall roam. Stream from the hill-side
Gray shall gush. Together shall stand
Troops of comrades. Truth in an earl,
In councillors wisdom. The woods shall bloom
With brightest hues; hills shall stand
Green on the earth. God is in heaven,
To judge our deeds. Door for the hall,
The building's mouth. Boss for the shield,
Fingers to fend. Fowls in the air
Shall sport and play. Salmon in the pool
Shall dart and shoot. Showers from the skies
Windy and wet on the world shall fall.
Thief shall stalk in the dark. Giant shall dwell on the fen,
Alone on the moorland. Maid shall in secret
Go to her friend, if she fail to be bought
With gold before her folk. The flood shall be salt,

Waves of the ocean that wash the land,
And break on the shores. The beast of the field
Shall breed and bring forth. Bright in the heavens
Stars shall glitter, as God hath bid them.
Good against evil; youth against age;
Light against dark; life against death;
Host against host shall harry the land,
Foe against foe with feud shall come,
Stirring up strife. The sage shall ponder
This warring world. The "wolf" shall hang,
Pay for the wrong he wrought upon earth,
His guilt among men; God alone knows
The place that his soul shall seek hereafter,
Bourne of the spirits that speed to their Maker,
When the stroke of death hath sent them to God,
Where they wait for their doom. Dark is the future,
Dark and hidden! He alone knows,
Our Helper in need; for none comes hither,
Revisits his home to reveal to men
What manner of mansions the Almighty inhabits,
What seats of glory are God's abode.

(From the *Exeter Book*)

As the sea is smooth when storms are at rest, (*55-56*)
So people are quiet when peace is proclaimed.

Ship shall be nailed, shield shall be bound (*94*)
Lindenwood decked. Dear to the Frisian wife,
And welcome the sailor that stands at the door.
Home is her husband, his boat's in the harbor;
She bids him in, her own provider;
She washes his weedy coat; she gets him garments fresh.
'Tis dear on the land where a loved one is waiting.
Wife shall be true to the man she hath wedded.
Faithful are many, but many are froward,

They will love a stranger when their lord is away.
Long doth the seaman stay on his voyage,
Weary the wife that waits her dear one.
Though bitter her lot, she bideth her hour;
Safe again home she shall see her husband
Unless he is lying, lost and sunken,
Locked in the arms of the ocean vast. (*107*)

Hapless outlaws shall house with the wolves; (*147*)
The treacherous beasts oft tear their comrade.
When the gray-wolf kills, there are graves to be filled,
His howls are heard as hungry he roams,
Prowling for prey; no pity in his wail
For men he has murdered; he is greedy for more.

Prudent counsels are becoming to men. (*166*)
To the gleeman his song, to the sage his wisdom.
As many men, so many minds:
Separate thanes have separate thoughts.
He longeth the least that hath store of lays,
Or with hands of skill can strike the harp,
On whom God hath bestowed the gift of song.
Wretched who lives alone in the world
Doomed by fate to dwell without friends;
'Twere better he had a brother in his house,
Both men sons of the self-same father. (*176*)

There's sport on the ship when she runs under sail (*186*)
'Tis weary work against wind to row.
They call him a coward and craven shirk,
Whose oar is aboard with blade unwetted.

THE FATES OF MEN

(From the *Exeter Book*)

Full oft by the grace of God it happens
To man and woman in wedlock joined,
A child is born. They cherish it fondly,
Tend and teach it, till the time is come,
When the little one's limbs, in the lapse of years,
Have sturdy grown, and gained their strength.
So father and mother fondly rear it,
Nourish and guard it. But God alone knows
The gift of the years to the growing child.
Sudden death is the doom of one,
Snatched away in the spring of his youth
By a violent end, devoured by wolves
That range the heath: Her unhappy child
The mother bemoans, but man may not change it.

One shall famine slay; another the flood sweep away!
One shall the battle break; another the bolt o'ertake!
One shall in darkness drear drag out his life,
Groping to feel where his foot may stand.
Stricken with palsy in sinew and limb,
Another shall grieve and groan at his fate.
One shall fall from a forest tree:
Fearful he wheels in wingless flight,
Spins through the air and swoops to the ground;
From the crown of the trunk he crashes to earth,
Stunned and senseless, all still he lies
On the straggling roots, his soul is fled!

One shall wander, weary and foot-sore,
Far through the world, famished and needy,
Trudging at dawn along dewy trails,

In a land unloved and an alien soil.
Few are alive to befriend the wanderer,
Ever unwelcome his eyes of woe.
High on the gallows shall hang another,
Dangle and strangle till he stiffen in death.
Bloody-beaked birds on his body shall prey;
The plundering raven shall pluck out his eyes,
Tear and claw the carcass to shreds.
Helpless he hangs,—his hands avail not
To ward off the scavengers that swoop through the air.
Hope-of-life has left that livid corpse;
Senseless and stark he suffers his Wyrd,
Drowned in the death-mist: doom of the criminal.

One shall be burnt in the weltering blaze;
Flames shall devour their fated victim,
Swift and sudden his sundering from life
In the lurid glow. Loud wails the mother,
As she watches the flames enfolding her darling.
One shall be slain as he sits on the mead-bench,
Ale-brawl ended by edge of the sword:
The drunkard's folly,—too forward his tongue! (*50*)

So the Lord Almighty allots unto men (*64*)
Manifold fortunes o'er the face of the earth;
Dealeth their dole, their destiny holds.
To some he gives wealth, to some he gives woe,
Gladness of youth to some, to others glory in battle,
Strength in the war-play with spear and with bow-string,
Fame and honor; to others he gives
Skill in the game of the checkered board.
Some become learned in lore of books.
Some have the gift of working in gold:
Of beaten metal they make bright ornaments,
And get broad lands from their lord in return,

Receive them with joy from the generous king.
One shall wait upon wassailing comrades,
Gladden the hearts of heroes carousing,
Large is their joy as they laugh at the revels.
One shall be found at the feet of his lord;
With his harp he shall win a harvest of wealth;
Quickly he tightens the twangling strings,
They ring and they swing as his spur-shod finger
Dances across them: deftly he plays.
Another shall tame the towering falcon,
Hawk in hand, till the haughty flier
Grows meek and gentle; he makes him jesses,
Feeds in fetters the feather-proud bird,
With dainty morsels, the dauntless soarer,
Until the wild one is weakened and humbled,
Belled and tasselled, obeys his master
Hooded and tamed and trained to his hand.

So marvelously God in his might bestows
Skill upon men in many lands,
Shaping their lives, and allotting their fortunes
To dwellers on earth of every kin.
Let each man render Him honor and praise
For the gifts His grace hath granted to mortals.

VII. HISTORIC WAR-POEMS

THE BATTLE OF BRUNNANBURG

(From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 937 A. D.)

Æthelstan Lord, and leader of earls,
Gold-friend of heroes, he with his brother
Edmund Ætheling, agelong glory
Won in war with weapons keen

By Brúnnanbúrg. They broke the shield-wall;
With offspring of hammers they hewed the lindenwoods,
Heirs of Edward. Oft had they driven
The foe from the land, and foiled the invader,
True to their blood in battle defending
Their hoard and their home. Huge was the slaughter
They made of the boat-crews and bands of the Scotsmen.
Doomed men fell. The field was drenched;
Ran with the blood of the bravest fighters
From rise of the sun, when the radiant day-star,
Bright candle of God, came in the morning-tide
Gliding o'er earth, till the glorious creature
Sank to its setting. The slain lay thick;
Maimed by the spear lay many a Northman,
Shot over shield; shattered and war-spent,
Many a Scot. But the men of Wessex
Drove all day the Dane-folk before them;
Hung on the trail of the troop that they hated;
Hewed from behind the host of the pirates,
With weapons new-whetted. Not one of the rovers
Who came with Anlaf across the water
Aboard his war-ship, bound for our shores,
Fated to fall, found that the Mercian
Refused him hand-play. Five young chieftains
Lay stretched on the field. Seven great earls
Of Anlaf were killed, and countless others
Of boatmen and Scotsmen. Barely escaped
The Northern leader. Leaving in haste,
With a handful of men, he made for his ship.
They cleared the craft, the king put out
On the fallow flood. He fled for his life.
Also the cunning Constantinus
Home again stole to his haunts in the north.
Little ground had the gray old leader
To brag and to boast of the battle-encounter,
Stripped of his clansmen killed in the slaughter.

Alone he returned, his own son dead,
Left on the battle-field, bloody and mangled,
Brave young warrior. No bragging for him,
Grisly old traitor, of glorious sword-play;
Little for him or Anlaf to laugh about,
In midst of the wreck of their mighty array.
No boasting for them that they had the better
In the crashing of helmets, the heat of the conflict;
The splintering of spears, the struggle of heroes;
The grinding of weapons, the game of battle
They chose to play with the children of Edward.
So parted the Northmen on their nail-studded ships,
Blood-reddened wreck and remnant of lances;
Sailed o'er the deep again, Dublin to seek,
And the shores of Ireland, shamed and defeated.

Back to their Wessex home, went the two brothers;
King and Ætheling, came to their own again;
Victors in triumph returned from the war;
Leaving behind, the horn-billed raven
The gloomy-coated, to glut on the carcasses;
Leaving behind, the white-tailed eagle
Perched on the corpses to prey on the carrion;
Leaving behind, the haggard kite,
And the gray-wolf gaunt to gorge on the slain.

Never was made a mightier slaughter;
Never sword reaped a ruddier harvest
Of high-born heroes, here in this island,
Since hither of old, Angles and Saxons,
—So say the chronicles,—sailed from the Eastward,
Crossed o'er the billows, to conquer the Britons;
When haughty battle-smiths hammered the Welshmen
And honor-keen earls first entered this realm.

THE BATTLE OF MALDON

(991 A. D.)

The beginning of the poem is lost. The first sixteen lines of the remaining portion describe how Byrhtnoth's men, arrived at the battle field, dismount and turn their horses loose, how one of them sends his hawk flying to the wood, and how the East Saxon alderman proceeds to marshal his band on the banks of the stream. The poem continues as follows:

Byrhtnoth encouraged his comrades heartily; (17)
Rode through the ranks and roused their spirits;
Marshalled his men to meet the onset;
Showed them how they should hold their shields
Firm in their grip, and fearless stand.
When he had briskly whetted their courage,
He leaped from his steed and stood with his people,
His hearth-band beloved and house-hold thanes.

Then strode to the strand a stalwart Northman,
The viking herald. They heard him shout,
Send o'er the tide the taunt of the pirates;
Hailing the earl, he hurled this challenge:
"Bold sea-rovers bade me tell thee
Straightway thou must send them tribute,
Rings for ransome, royal treasure;
Better with gifts ye buy us off,
Ere we deal hard blows and death in battle.
Why spill we blood when the bargain is easy?
Give us the pay and we grant ye peace.
If thou dost agree, who art greatest here,
To ransom thy folk with the fee we demand,
And give to the seamen the gold they ask,
Pay with tribute for treaty of peace,

We load the booty aboard our ships,
Haul to sea and hold the truce."
Byrhtnoth spake, he brandished his spear,
Lifted his shield and shouted aloud,
Grim was his wrath as he gave them his answer:
"Hearest thou pirate my people's reply?
Ancient swords they will send for ransom;
Poison-tipped points they will pay for tribute;
Treasure that scarce will serve you in battle.
Go back pirate, give them my answer;
Bring them this word of bitter defiance;
Tell them here standeth, stern and intrepid.
The earl with his folk, to defend his country;
Æthelred's realm, the rights of my lord,
His house and his home; the heathen shall fall,
Pirates and robbers. My people were shamed
If ye loaded our booty aboard your ships,
And floated them off unfought, to sea,
Having sailed so far, to set foot on our soil.
Not all so easily earn ye our gold!
Sword-blades and spear-points we sell you first;
Battle-play grim, ere ye get our tribute!"

Forward he told his troop to come,
To step under shield and stand by the shore.
The breadth of the stream kept the bands asunder;
Strong came flowing the flood after ebb,
Filled the channel, and foamed between them.
Impatient stood by Panta stream,
East-Saxon host and horde of the pirates,
Longing to lock their lances in battle.
Neither could harass or harm the other,
Save that some fell by the flight of arrows.

Down went the tide, the Danes were ready;
Burned for battle the band of the Vikings;

On the bridge stood Wulfstan and barred their way.
Byrhtnoth sent him, a seasoned warrior,
Ceola's son, with his kinsmen to hold it.
The first of the Vikings who ventured to set
Foot on the bridge, he felled with his spear.
Two sturdy warriors stood with Wulfstan,
Maccus and Ælfherè, mighty pair,
Kept the approach where the crossing was shallow;
Defended the bridge, and fought with the boldest,
As long as their hands could lift a sword.
When the strangers discovered and clearly saw
What bitter fighters the bridgewards proved,
They tried a trick, the treacherous robbers,
Begged they might cross and bring their crews
Over the shallows and up to the shore.
The earl was ready in reckless daring
To let them land too great a number.
Byrhthelm's son, while the seamen listened,
Called across, o'er the cold water:
"Come ye seamen, come and fight us!
We give you ground, but God alone knows
Who to-day shall hold the field."

Strode the battle-wolves bold through the water;
West over Panta waded the pirates;
Carried their shields o'er the shining waves;
Safely their lindenwoods landed the sailors.
Byrhtnoth awaited them, braced for the onslaught,
Haughty and bold at the head of his band.
Bade them build the bristling war-hedge,
Shield against shield, to shatter the enemy.
Near was the battle, now for the glory,
Now for the death of the doomed in the field.
Swelled the war-cry, circled the ravens,
Screamed the eagle, eager for prey;
Sped from the hand the hard-forged spear-head,

Showers of darts, sharp from the grind-stone.
Bows were busy, bolt stuck in buckler;
Bitter the battle-rush, brave men fell,
Heroes on either hand hurt in the fray.
Wounded was Wulfmær, went to his battle-rest;
Cruelly mangled, kinsman of Byrhtnoth,
Son of his sister, slain on the field.

Pay of vengeance they paid the Vikings;
I heard of the deed of the doughty Edward:
He struck with his sword a stroke that was mighty,
Down fell the doomed man, dead at his feet.
For this the thane got the thanks of his leader,
Praise that was due for his prowess in fight.
Grimly they held their ground in the battle,
Strove with each other the stout-hearted heroes,
Strove with each other, eager to strike
First with their darts the foe that was doomed.
Warriors thronged, the wounded lay thick.
Stalwart and steady they stood about Byrhtnoth.
Bravely he heartened them, bade them to win
Glory in battle by beating the Danes.
Raising his shield, he rushed at the enemy;
Covered by buckler, he came at a Viking;
Charged him furious, earl against churl,
Each for the other had evil in store.
The sailorman sent from the south a javelin,
Sorely wounding the war-band's leader;
He shoved with his shield, the shaft snapped short;
The spear was splintered and sprang against him;
Wroth was Byrhtnoth, reached for his weapon;
Gored the Viking that gave him the wound.
Straight went the lance, strong was the leader;
He thrust it sheer through the throat of the pirate.
His dart meant death, so deadly his aim.
Swiftly he sent him a second javelin,

That crashed through the corslet and cleft his bosom,
Wounded him sore through his woven mail;
The poisonous spear-head stood in his heart.
Blithe was the leader, laughed in his breast,
Thanked his Lord for that day's work.

Now one of the pirates poised his weapon;
Sped from his hand a spear that wounded
Through and through the thane of Æthelred.
There stood at his side a stripling youth;
Brave was the boy; he bent o'er his lord,
Drew from his body the blood-dripping dart.
'Twas Wulfmær the youthful, son of Wulfstan;
Back he hurled the hard-forged spear.
In went the point, to earth fell the pirate
Who gave his master the mortal hurt.
A crafty seaman crept toward the earl
Eager to rob his armor and rings,
His bracelets and gear and graven sword.
Then Byrhtnoth drew his blade from the sheath,
Broad and blood-rusted, struck at the breast-plate.
But one of the seamen stopped the warrior,
Beat down the arm of the earl with his lance.
Fell to the ground the gray-hilted sword;
No more he might grasp his goodly blade,
Wield his weapon; yet words he could utter;
The hoar-headed warrior heartened his men;
Bade them forward to fare and be brave.
When the stricken leader no longer could stand,
He looked to heaven and lifted his voice:
"I render Thee thanks O Ruler of men,
For the joys Thou hast given, that gladdened my life.
Merciful Maker, now most I need,
Thy goodness to grant me a gracious end,
That my soul may swiftly speed to Thee,
Come to Thy keeping, O King of angels,

Depart in peace. I pray Thee Lord
That the fiends of hell may not harm my spirit."
The heathen pirates then hewed him to pieces,
And both the brave men that by him stood;
Ælfnoth and Wulfmær, wounded to death,
Gave their lives for their lord in the fight.

Then quitted the field the cowards and faint-hearts;
The son of Odda started the flight.
Godric abandoned his good lord in battle,
Who many a steed had bestowed on his thane.
Leaped on the horse that belonged to his leader,
Not *his* were the trappings, *he* had no right to them.
Both of his brothers basely fled with him,
Godwin and Godwy, forgetful of honor,
Turned from the fight, and fled to the woods,
Seeking the cover, and saving their lives.
Those were with them, who would have remained
Had they remembered how many favors
Their lord had done them in days of old.
Offa foretold it, what time he arose
To speak where they met to muster their forces.
Many, he said, were mighty in words
Whose courage would fail when it came to the fighting.

There lay on the field the lord of the people,
Æthelred's earl; all of them saw him,
His hearth-companions beheld him dead.
Forward went fighting the fearless warriors,
Their courage was kindled, no cowards were they;
Their will was fixed on one or the other:
To lose their life, or avenge their leader
Ælfwinė spoke to them, son of Ælfric,
Youthful in years, but unyielding in battle;
Roused their courage, and called them to honor:
"Remember the time when we talked in the mead-hall,

When bold on our benches we boasted our valor,
Deeds of daring we'd do in the battle!
Now we may prove whose prowess is true.
My birth and my breeding I boldly proclaim:
I am sprung from a mighty Mercian line.
Aldhelm the alderman, honored and prosperous,
He was my grandsire, great was his fame:
My people who know me shall never reproach me,
Say I was ready to run from the battle,
Go back to my home, and abandon my leader,
Slain on the field. My sorrow is double,
Both kinsman and lord I've lost in the fight."
Forward he threw himself, thirsting for vengeance;
Sent his javelin straight at a pirate.
Fell with a crash his foe to the earth,
His life-days ended. Then onward he strode,
Urging his comrades to keep in the thick of it.

Up spake Offa, with ashen spear lifted:
"Well hast thou counselled us, well hast encouraged,
Noble Ælfwinė, needs must we follow thee.
Now that our leader lies low on the field,
Needs must we steadfastly stand by each other;
Close in the conflict keeping together,
As long as our hands can hold a weapon,
Good blade wield. Godric the coward,
Son of Odda, deceived us all.
Too many believed 'twas our lord himself,
When they saw him astride the war-steed proud.
His run-away ride our ranks hath broken;
Shattered the shield-wall. Shame on the dastard!
Who caused his comrades like cowards to fly!
Up spake Leofsunu, lifted his linden-wood,
Answered his comrades from under his shield:
"Here I stand, and here shall I stay!
Not a foot will I flinch, but forward I'll go!

Vengeance I've vowed for my valiant leader.
Now that my friend is fallen in battle,
My people shall never reproach me, in Stourmere;
Call me deserter, and say I returned
Leaderless, lordless, alone from the fight.
Better is battle-death; boldly I welcome
The edge and the iron." Full angry he charged,
Daring all danger, disdaining to fly.

Up spake Dunherė, old and faithful,
Shook his lance and shouted aloud,
Bade them avenge the valiant Byrhtnoth:
"Wreak on the Danes the death of our lord!
Unfit is for vengeance who values his life."
Fell on the foe the faithful body-guard,
Battle-wroth spearmen, beseeching God
That they might avenge the thane of Æthelred,
Pay the heathen with havoc and slaughter.
The son of Ecglaf, Æscferth by name,
Come of a hardy North-humbrian race,
—He was their hostage,—helped them manfully.
Never he faltered or flinched in the war-play;
Lances a plenty he launched at the pirates,
Shot them on shield, or sheer through the breast-plate;
Rarely he missed them, many he wounded,
While he could wield his weapon in battle.
Still Edward the long held out at the front;
Brave and defiant, he boasted aloud
That he would not yield a hair's breadth of ground,
Nor turn his back where his better lay dead.
He broke through the shield-wall, breasted the foe,
Worthily paid the pirate warriors
For the life of his lord ere he laid him down.
Near him Æthelric, noble comrade,
Brother of Sibryht, brave and untiring,
Mightily fought, and many another;

Hacked the hollow shields, holding their own.
Bucklers were broken the breast-plate sang
Its gruesome song. The sword of Offa
Went home to the hilt in the heart of a Viking.
But Offa himself soon had to pay for it,
The kinsman of Gadd succumbed in the fight.
Yet ere he fell, he fulfilled his pledge,
The promise he gave to his gracious lord,
That both should ride to their burg together,
Home to their friends, or fall in the battle,
Killed in conflict and covered with wounds;
He lay by his lord, a loyal thane.

Mid clash of shields the shipmen came on,
Maddened by battle. Full many a lance
Home was thrust to the heart of the doomed.
Then sallied forth Wistan, Wigèlin's son;
Three of the pirates he pierced in the throng,
Ere he fell, by his friends, on the field of slaughter.
Bitter the battle-rush, bravely struggled
Heroes in armor, while all around them
The wounded dropped and the dead lay thick.
Oswold and Eadwold all the while
Their kinsmen and comrades encouraged bravely,
Both of the brothers bade their friends
Never to weaken or weary in battle,
But keep up their sword-play, keen to the end.
Up spake Byrhtwold, brandished his ash-spear,
—He was a tried and true old hero,—
Lifted his shield and loudly called to them:
"Heart must be keener, courage the hardier,
Bolder our mood as our band diminisheth.
Here lies in his blood our leader and comrade,
The brave on the beach. Bitter shall rue it
Who turns his back on the battle-field now.
Here I stay; I am stricken and old;

My life is done; I shall lay me down
Close by my lord and comrade dear."

[Six more lines and the MS. breaks off. There cannot have been much left. The battle is over. And the words of old Byrhtwold make a fitting close for these renderings of Old English verse. "Dark and true and tender is the north," and it dies fighting.]

PART SECOND

FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER

I. HISTORY AND ROMANCE

Layamon

(About 1200)

HOW LAYAMON WROTE HIS BOOK

(From the *Brut*, about 1205)

In the land lived a priest, who was Layamon callèd,
He was Leovenath's son; Lord to him be gracious,
He abided at Arnley, at the great Church there
Upon Severn's side, (it seemed to him good there)
Hard by to Radèstone, where he read bookès.
It came in his mind, and he made it his purpose,
To tell of the English, the triumphs of old;
What names the men had, what lands they were come from;
What folk English-land first of all ownèd
After the deluge that down from the Lord came
Which quellèd all men that quick here it foundè, [*killed*]
Except Noah and Shem, Japhet and Ham,
And their four wives who were in the ark with them.

So 'gan Layamon wander wide 'mongst the people,
And noble books got he for guides in his labours.
That English book took he, made by Saint Bæda;
Another in Latin, left by Saint Albin,
And the bless'd Austin, who baptism brought us;
A third he took likewise, and laid it among them,
That a French clerk had made,—Wace was he callèd,
This goodly writing he gave to the noble
Eleanor, of Henry, that high King, his Queen.
Layamon laid these books down, their leaves he turned over,
With love he looked on them, the Lord grant him mercy,
Feather took he with fingers, and fair on the book-skin [*pen*]
The sooth words then wrote he, and set them together,
And these three writings he wrought into one.

Now Layamon prayeth, for the Lord's love Almighty,
Each wise man who readeth words in this book written,
And heedeth this teaching, that these holy wordès
He say all together:
For the soul of his father, who forth him broughtè,
For the soul of his mother, who made him a man,
And for his own soul, so that better befall it.

Amen.

Robert of Gloucester

IN PRAISE OF ENGLAND

(From *Riming Chronicle*, about 1300)

England is a right good land, I ween of all the best.
Set it is at the world's end, afar within the west,
And all about it goes the sea, it standeth as an isle.
Its foes it thus needs fear the less, except it be through guile

On part of folk of its own land, as hath been seen erstwhile.
From North to South it stretches out in length eight hundred mile,
Two hundred miles from East to West in breadth the land extends;—
In the mid-land, that is to say, and not as at one end.
Plenty one may in Engėland of all good thingės see;
If only folk will spoil them not, or other worse years be.
For Engėland is full enough of fruit and eke of treen,
Of woodės and of parkės most joyful to be seen;
Of fowlės and of beastės, both wild and tame also;
Of salt fish and of fresh fish, of rivers fair thereto;
Of wells both sweet and cold enough, of pasture and of mead;
Of ore of silver and of gold, of tin and eke of lead;
Of steel, of iron, and of brass, of coin in great plenty;
Of wheat and eke of wool, so good none better may there be.
Waters it hath enough alsó; before all others three,
As arms are these out of the land, and reaching to the sea.
By them the ships may come from sea and out their way may trace,
And bring inland enough of goods, to well nigh every place.
Severn, and Thames, and Humber, so these three rivers stand;
And in the midst, as hath been said, there lyeth the pure land.

NORMAN AND ENGLISH

(From the same)

Thus came, lo Engėland into Normandy's hand,
And the Normans could speak then naught but their own speech,
And spoke French as at home, and their children did teach,
So high men of this land, that of Norman blood come,

Keep them all to that speech that they had at their home.
If a man know not French, small store men by him set,
But low men hold to English and to their own speech yet.
I ween that there beëth in the world countries none
That hold not to their own speech but England alone.
And well do I wot to know both well it is,
For the more a man knows the more worth he is.

Laurence Minot

(About 1300-1352)

THE BATTLE OF HALIDON HILL

Listen, Lordings, if you will
Hear of the battle of Halidon Hill.

True King that sitteth on thy throne,
Unto thee I tell my tale,
And unto thee I bid a boon,
For thou art balm of all my bale.
As thou hast made the earth and moon,
And beasts and foulès great and smale,
Unto me send thy succour soon
Direct my deedès in this dale.

In this dale I droup and dare [*pine*]
For evil deeds that cost me dear,
For England had my heart great care,
When Edward went at first to were. [*war*]
The men of France were bold to fare
Against him with the shield and spere;
They turned again with sidès sair
And all their pomp not worth a pere. [*pear*]

A pear is more of price sometide [*sometimes*]
Than all the boast of Normandie.
They sent their ships on ilka side
With flesh and wine and wheat and rye;
With heart and hand, 'tis not denied,
For to help Scotland gan they hie,
They fled and durst no deed abide
And all their boast not worth a flye.

For all their boast they durst not fight,
For dint of death they had such dout, [*fear*]
Of Scotland had they never sight
Although they were of wordès stout.
They would have magnified their might
And troubled were they there about.
Now God help Edward in his right,—
Amen—and all his ready rout.

His ready rout may Jesu speed.
And save them both by night and day;
That Lord of Heaven may Edward lead,
And him maintain as well He may,
The Scotchmen now all wide will sprede [*disperse*]
For they have failèd of their prey,
Now are they daunted all for drede
That were before so stout and gay.

Gay they were and well they thought
On Earl Moray and others stout;
They said it should full dear be bought,
The land whence they were driven out.
Philip Valois wordès wrought,
And said he should their foeman stay;
But all these words they went for naught,
Words must be meet or weak are they.

More menaces they boasting cry,
In spite of might they have their meed;
And many a night awake they lie
To harm all England by their deed;
But low is now that pride so high
Of those that were so stout on steed;
And some of them all naked lie
Not far from Berwick upon Tweed.

A little from that selfsame town,
Halidon Hill that is the name,
There was crackèd many a crown
Of the wild Scot and eke of tame.
Then was their banner borne all down,
To make such boasts they were to blame;
But nathèless aye are they boune [*ready*]
To hurt Engländ with sorrow and shame.

Shame they have as I here say;
At Dundee now is done their dance,
And wend they must another way
Even through Flanders into France.
On Philip Valois fast cry they,
There for to dwell and him advance.
And nothing list they now to play
Since them befell this sorry chance.

This sorry chance hath them o'erthrown,
For they were false and wondrous fell;
For cursèd caitiffs are they known
And full of treason, sooth to tell.
Sir John Comyn had they struck down,
In holy kirk they did him quell; [*kill*]
So many a Scottish bride makes moan
With dolour dight there must they dwell. [*grief-stricken*]

There dwelled our king, the sooth to sayn,
With his menië a little while; [*company*]
He gave good comfort on that plain
To all his men about a mile.
Although his men were mickle of main, [*great of might*]
Ever they doubted them of guile;
They Scottish gauds might nowise gain [*trappings, booty*]
For all they stumbled at that stile.

They came not from that strife alive
That were before so proud in prese, [*the post of danger*]
Jésu, for thy woundès five,
In England help us to have peace.

PRAYER FOR KING EDWARD

(From *How Edward the King came to Brabant*)

God that shaped both sea and sand,
Save Edward, King of Engëland,
Both body, soul, and life,
And grant him joy withouten strife;
For many men 'gainst him are wroth
In Francë and in Flanders both,
For he defendeth fast his right
And thereto Jésu grant him might,
That he may do so night and day
That it may be for Goddès pay. [*satisfaction*]

SONG OF THE SCOTTISH MAIDENS AFTER THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

(1314)

(*Author unknown*)

Maidens of Enëglande sore may ye mourn
For the loss of your true-loves at Bannockës burn!
With heve-a-lowe!

What? Weenèd the King of Engèlande
To have gotten Scotland?
With rumbylowe!

John Barbour

(About 1316-1395)

FREEDOM

(From *The Bruce*)

Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom makes man to have likíng; [*his wish*]
Freedom all solace to man giveth,
He liveth at ease that freely liveth.
A noble heart may have no ease,
May have naught else that may him please,
If freedom fail'th; for free likíng
Is yearned for o'er all other thing.
Nay, he that aye has livèd free
May not know well the propertie,
The anger, nay, the wretched doom
That coupled is to foul thraldóme,
But if he had assayèd it
Then all perforce he should it wit; [*know*]
And should think freedom more to prize
Than all the gold in world that is.
Thus contrar thingès evermore
Disclosers of the tother are.

SIR ORPHEO

(14th Century)

(*Author unknown*)

We read full oft and find y-writ
As clerkés wise make us to wit,
Those lays that have for men's harpíng
Been made of many a noble thing:
Some are of weal; and some of woe,
Some of joy and mirth alsó,
Some of jest and ribaldry,
And some there are of faërie;
Of traitors some, and some of guile,
Or some mishap that chanced erstwhile:
Of all the things that men may see
Most fit to praise forsooth they be.
In Brittany these lays were wrought,
There first were made, and thence were brought,
Of áventures that fell in days
Whereof the Britons made their lays;
So when of old they chanced to hear
Of áventures in days that were,
They took their harps with glee and game
And made a lay and did it name.
Of áventures that did befall
I can tell some but nowise all.
Harken, lordlings, that be true,
And I will tell of Sir Orphew.

Orpheo was a richė King,
And in his time a great lordíng;
A full fair man both large and tall,
And courteous and brave withal.
His father was come of King Plutó,

And his mother came of Queen Junó,
Who in old times as gods were holden
For deeds they did and words they tolden.
Orpheo most of anything,
Loved the music of harpíng;
Certain was every good harpóur
From him to have most high honóur.
Right well himself he loved to harp,
And gave thereto his wittès sharp;
He learnèd so that there was none,
Who could harp better 'neath the sun.
Man in this world was never born,
Who, if he Orpheo sat beforn,
And once might of his harping hear,
But he should thinkè that he were
In one of the joys of Paradis,
Such music in his harping is.
Orpheo livèd in Crasséns,
A city noble in defence,
He hath a queen full fair of pris, [*price*]
That callèd is Dame Erodys,
The fairest woman for the nonès [*in her time*]
That might be made of flesh and bonès,
Full of all love and of goodnéss,
No man may tell of her fairnéss.
It befel in time of May,—
When is merry and pleasing the summer's day,
Away have gone the winter's showers,
And every field is full of flowers,
Of blossoms springing on the bough,
O'er all the land 'tis merry enow,—
That this same Queen, Dame Erodys,
Took with her maidens two of pris,
And walkèd in the undertide [*morning*]
To play within her orchard-side.
To see the flowers spread and spring,

And see and hear the sweet birds sing.
Then down they seated them all three,
Fairly beneath an ympè tree, [*grafted tree*]
And full soon that fairest queen,
Fell fast asleep upon the green,
The maidens durst not her awake,
But round her they 'gan merry make,
And let her sleep till afternoon
When the undertide was gone;
And as soon as she gan wake
She cried, and loathsome 'gan her make,
Her hands and eke her feet she tore,
And scratched her till she bled full sore;
Her clothing rich she all to-rent,
All wild out of her wittès went.
The maidens two that sat beside,
They durst no longer there abide,
But straightway sought the castle hall
And told both knights and squires all,
How that their Queen away would go.
The knights went also, and ladies too,
And demoiselles fifty and many mo, [*more*]
To fetch her as they fain would do.
Into the orchard ran they out
And took her in their armès stout,
And brought her to her bed at last
And therein held her down full fast;
But still she cried in angry mood,
And rent herself as she were wode. [*mad*]
When heard the King this dread tidíng,
He was never so woe for any thing.
The King came with his knightès keen [*bold*]
Into the chamber to his Queen,
And for her had he great pitíe.
"Sweet heart," he said, "how may this be,
That thou who ever wert so still,

Shouldst now cry out so loud and shrill?
Thy body that was white beforn,
Now with thy nails is rent and torn.
Alas! thy cheeks which were so red
Are now all wan and grey as lead,
And thy dainty fingers fair,
Pallid now and bloody are.
Alas! thy lovely eyên too
Look on me as on a foe.
Ladie dear, I crave mercíe,
Lét be all this rueful cry,
And tell to me what thing, and how,
If any thing,—may help thee now."
Still grows the lady at the last,
While she began to weep full fast,
Saying, while yet the tears would flow,
"Alas! my lord, Sir Orpheo,
Never since we two plighted troth
Was either with the other wroth,
Yet ever hast thou lovèd me,
With all mine heart so have I thee;
And now we twain shall part in two,
Do thy best, yet I must go."
"Alas!" he said, "my life is bare,
Unto whom goest thou and where?
Where thou comest thou shalt with me,
Whither thou goest I will with thee."
"Sir," said she, "it may not be thus,
I'll tell thee how it is with us.
As I lay this undertide
Asleep upon the orchard-side,
Two gallant knights came to me there,
Arrayed in richest garments fair,
And bade me come without lettíng,
To speak unto their lord the king.
Right boldly then I answered there—

'Nor will I come, nor do I dare.'
At the word they did depart,
Then came their King so blithe of heart,
With a thousand knights and mo
And fifty fair ladíes alsó,
A-riding all on snow-white steeds,
And snow-white also were their weeds, [*garments*]
Never, in faith, since I was born
Knights so fair came me beforn.
The King a crown had on his head,
'Twas not of silver, nor gold so red,
All it was of precious stone,
As bright as sun forsooth it shone.
He stayed for naught but straight me sought,
And willy, nilly, me he caught,
And me he made with him to ride
On a white palfrey by his side,
And brought me in to his palýs, [*palace*]
Right well bedight it was I wis.
He showed me castles, halls and towers,
Rivers, meadows, fields and flowers,
And his forests every one;
And after, back he brought me home,
Back into our own orchárd,
And said to me this afterward:
'Look tomorrow that thou be
Here beneath this ympė tree;
And if thou makest any let,
Where'er thou be thou shalt be fet, [*fetched*]
And to tear thy limbės all,
Shall help thee naught whate'er befall,
And although thou be all torn
Yet away shalt thou be borne.' "
When the King he heard this case,
"Out!" he said, "alace! alace!
I had rather lose my life

Than to lose the Queen my wife!"
Counsel he asked of many man
But of them all none help him can.
The hour came, the morrow's sun,
The King hath put his armour on,
Two hundred knights he takes with him,
Fully armèd, stout and grim:
Out then with the Queen went he
Into the orchard 'neath the tree;
Then did they watch on every side,
And planned that there they would abide,
Resolved to suffer death and woe,
E'er that the Queen should from them go.
But shortly then did it befall,
As the Queen sat among them all,
The fairy took that lady fair
And she was gone—no man wist where.
Crying and weeping there was alsó,
The King gan to his chamber go,
He fell adown upon the stone,
And made great dole and mickle moan,
Well nigh he had himself yschent [*disgraced*]
He saw there was no ámendement.
He sent for earl and for baróun,
And other lords of great renown,
And, when they all together were,
"Lordès," he said, "assembled here,
I set mine steward of mine hall
To keep my landès over all.
Now my Queen is left forlorn,
The best ladíe that e'er was born;
No more will I woman see,
In wilderness now will I be,
And there abide in woodlands hoar
And in the wilds forevermore.
Then when ye know I have left all,

Ye straight a parliament shall call,
And ye shall chose you a new King,
And do your best in everything."
Great sorrow then was in the hall,
Weeping and crying 'mongst them all,
And there might neither old nor young
For weeping speak a word with tongue
They kneelèd all a-down i-fere, [*togelher*[
And begged him if his will it were,
That he would never from them go,
"Away!" he said, "I will not so."
Then all his kindred he forsook
And unto him a sclaveyn took, [*hair-shirt*]
He would have no other hood;
Hose, nor shoe, nor other good;
Only his harp he took, and straight
He journeyed barefoot through the gate
No man there must with him go,
Alas! there weeping was and woe.
He that was King and bare the crown,
Went out so poorly from the town,
Into the wild he takes his road,
Both through the heath and through the wood.
Nothing he hath to give him ease,
But ever lives in great malaise. [*discomfort*]
In the rough wood he nights must pass,
And cover him with herb and grass;
He that had a great plentíe,
Meat, and drink, and dignitie,
Now must dig and grub full sair,
Ere of roots he gets his fare.
In summer on the haws he lives,
That midst her leaves the hawthorne gives;
In winter, by the root and rind,
For other thing he may not find.
He was all shrunken, shriveled, pale,

With beating rain, and cutting hail;
No man could tell the travail sore
He had endured ten years or more.
He that had castles, halls and towers,
Forests, rivers, fields, and flowers,
Nothing that likes him now had he, [*pleases him*]
But savage beasts that from him flee.
His matted beard has shaggy grown,
Below his girdle has it gone.
He taketh harp and maketh glee,
And lies all night beneath a tree.
When bright and clear there dawns the day,
He takes his harp and makes no stay,
Amidst the wood he sits him down
And tunes his harp with a merry soun,
And harps all after his own will;
Through all the wood it ringeth shrill.
The savage beasts that there are found
For joy about him gather round,
And all the little birds that were,
For joy they come about him there
To listen to that harping fine,
So mickle joy there was therein.
His harping when he laid aside,
Nor bird, nor beast would then abide,
But all together they are flown,
And leave him there to sit alone.
Often saw he him beside,
In the heat of summer-tide,
The Fairy King with all his rout,
Come a-hunting all about.
With shout and merry din they go
And noise of hound and horn alsó;
And yet forsooth, no beast they slay,
Nor knows he where they take their way.
And other whiles he may espye,

A mighty hunt go passing by,
Full two hundred knights of pride
Armèd through the forest ride.
Somewhile he saw other thing,
Knights and ladies come ridíng
With raiment bright and courtly grace,
Moving all with easy pace,
Tabors and pipes with them there be,
And every kind of minstrelsy,
And ladies too there come ridíng,
Jolie they were in everything,
Gentle and gay they were I wis,
Nor no man there among them is.
Hawk on hand did each one bear,
And hawking went by the rivére,
Of game they found the favorite haunt,
Pheasant, hern, and cormorant.
The birds from out the river flew,
And every hawk his quarry slew.
That Orpheo saw in merry mood,
As underneath the bough he stood;
"Parfay," he said, "there is good game,
Thither will I, in Goddès name."
Such sport was he wont to see,
So up he rose and there came he
One lady there he came untó,
He searched her face and form alsó,
Right well he knew it was, I wis,
His own ladíe, Dame Erodys.
He saw her plain and she him eke,
Yet ne'er a word did either speak.
For him she did so poor espy
That sometime was so rich and high,
The tears ran down her face, I wis,
And looking on her so did his,
And then away they made her ride,

For there no longer she might bide.
"Alas!" he said, "and woe is me!
Why will not death come suddenly,
Wretch that I am! O, that I might
Die now, when I have seen this sight!
Alas! too long lasteth my life,
Since I may speak not with my wife,
Nor she with me a word may speak!
Alas! why will my heart not break!
Parfay! he said, whate'er betide,
I will see where those ladies ride,
And in that way I too will go—
I care not for my life a sloe." [*berry of the blackthorn*]
His sclavyne put he on his back
And took his harp right as he spak,
And swiftly after them is gone,
Over stock and over stone.
In at the rock the ladies ride,
He went straight after, he would not bide.
When he was into the rock y-go
Full three mile and some deal mo,
He came unto a fair countráy,
It was as bright as any day.
Neither hill nor dale was seen,
All was lawn full fair and green,
Midst it a castle met his eye,
Noble and rich, and wondrous high,
Over all the topmost wall
Shone as doth the clear crystál,
And the towers that were there
Were gaily set with pearlès fair;
The farthest, rising from the ditch,
Was all of gold and silver rich;
The front, that stood amidst them brade,
Was all of divers metals made;
Within, a wondrous dwelling wide,

With gold and gems all glorified,
The pillars fair thereon, were dight
With precious stones and sapphires bright.
So fair the palace shone by night
That all the town was full of light,
Those richė stones so fairly shone
They were as bright as any sun,
No man might tell, nor think in thought,
The riches that therein were wrought.
The ladies at the castle light,
He followed swiftly as he might;
Orpheo knockėd at the gate,
Ready the porter was thereat,
And askėd him "what wilt thou so?"
"Parfay! I am a minstrallo,
I bring thee solace with my glee, [*music*]
That thou the merrier may be."
He then undid the castle gate,
And let him in the palace straight.
About looked Orpheo over all,
He saw folk sit beneath the wall;
And some that had been brought thereto,
They seemėd dead yet were not so,
And there among them lay his wife,
That he loved as his own life;
She lay beneath an ympė tree,
By her look he wist 'twas she.
Then forth he went into the hall,
There was great joy amongst them all.
The richė King was seated there,
And Orpheo gave him greeting fair;
Beside him sate a Queenė bright,
Hardly of her he had a sight.
When he had looked on all this thing,
He kneelėd down before the King,
And asked him if his will it were

That he his minstrelsy would hear.
Then said the King: "And what art thou,
Who come into my presence now?
Myself nor none that is with me,
Have ever yet sent after thee.
Since I this kingdom first began
I have not found so brave a man
Who hither dared to come or wend,
Save that I after him should send."
"Sir," he said, "I trow full weel,
I hold it sooth, sir, every deal,
It is the custom of us all
To come to every lordès hall,
And though we may not welcome be,
Proffer we must our game or glee."
Before the King he sat him down,
And took his harp of merry soun,
And straightway as full well he can,
Many blithe notes he then began.
The King looked up and sat full still,
To hear his harping he had good will.
When he had ceased from his harping,
Then said to him that richè King:
"Minstrel, me liketh well thy glee;
Whatever thing thou ask of me,
Freely now I will thee pay,
Therefore, ask now, and assay."
"Lord," he said, "I beg of thee,
If that it shall your pleasure be,
Give me that lady bright of ble, [*hue*]
That lies beneath yon ympè tree."
"Nay," he said, "that may I ne'er,
For ye would be a sorry pair;
Thou art all shaggy rough and black,
And she is made withouten lack.
A foulè thing it were to see,

To put her in thy companíe."
"Lord," he said, "thou richė King,
It were yet a fouler thing,
To hear a lying word from thee,
As though thou promised nought to me,
Saying thou'd give me what I would!
A Kingės word must needs hold good."
"Thou sayest sooth," the King said than,
"Forsooth thou art a truė man.
I will well that it be so,
Take her by the hand, and go.
I will that thou of her be blithe."
And him he thankėd many a sythe. [*many times*]
He took her by the hand anon,
With right good will they out are gone,
And fast they hied from that paláce,
And went their way through Goddės grace;
Into the wilds they both are gone,
O'er holt and heath they journey on.
And so they take their way full fast,
And to Crasséns they come at last,
That sometime was her own citíe,
But no man wist that it was he.
With beggar poor of humblest life
A space he tarried with his wife.
He askėd tidings of the land,
And who the kingdom had in hand.
The humble beggar in his cote,
Answering, told him every grote;
How that the Queen was fetched away
To the land of faerie on a day,
And how the King did after go,
But to what place no man can know.
The Steward, he says, the land doth hold;
So, many tidings he them told.
The morrow at the noonė tide

Sir Orpheo bade his Queen there bide,
He took his harp and right anon
Into the town he straight is gone.
And when he came to the citíe,
Many a man him came to see,
Men and wives and maidens fair,
Gathered fast to see him there;
And marvelled much as him they view,
How thick the moss upon him grew;
"His beard is grown right to his knee,
His body is withered as a tree."
Then his own Steward did he meet,
Passing in state adown the street,
And Orpheo fell upon his knee
And said: "Lord help, for charitíe,
A minstrel I of Heathènesse,
Lord help me now in this distress."
The Steward said: "With me come home,
And of my goods thou shalt have some,
For Orpheo's sake once Lord to me,
All minèstralles shall welcome be."
Anon they went into the hạll,
The Steward and the lordès all.
The Steward washed, and went to meat,
And all the lordès down were set,
Then was there music in the hall,
But Orpheo sat against the wall.
When all are still, the music done,
He took his harp of sounding tone,
And fast on it he played the glee;
The Steward looked, and 'gan to see,
For well he knew that harp belive; [*quickly*]
"Minstrel," he said, "as thou mayst thrive,
How gottest thou that harp, and where?
Now for thine honor tell me fair."
"Lord, in an uncouth land," he said, [*unknown*]

"I found it in a forest glade;
I saw a man grown thin and pale,
It lay beside him in a dale,
Now it must be ten winters gone."
The Steward cried, and made great moan,
"It was my Lord, Sir Orpheo,
Ah! that he e'er did from us go."
The King beheld the Steward than,
And wist he was a right true man;
To him he said without lyíng,
"Sir, I am Orpheo, the King.
Here to the outskirts of the town,
I've brought my gentle lady down."
The lords all start that sit around,
Then wist they that the King was found.
With music and processióun,
They fetched the Queen into the town.
A good life lived they afterward,
And after them reigned the Stewárd.
Thus came they out of all their care,
God give us grace as well to fare!
And all that list to this talkíng
In heaven's bliss be their dwellíng!
Amen, amen, for charitíe,
Lord grant us that it so may be.

THE SEASONS

(From *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.* About 1370)
(*Author unknown*)

For the Yule-tide had yielded, and the year after,
And each several season ensued after other.
Thus after Christmas came crabbèd Lent-time,
That affords fish for flesh, and food the most simple.
But then the world's weather with winter is warring;

Winter withdraws himself, white clouds uplift;
Soft descendeth the rain in showers full warm,
They fall on fair fields and the flowers are showing,
Both the ground and the grove now with green are arrayed,
Birds bestir them to build, and bravely are singing
For solace of summer ensuing thereafter
On bank.
And blossoms bud and blow
On hedge-rows rich and rank,
And noble notes enow
Are heard in woodlands dank.

Then comes the season of summer, bathed in soft breezes,
Breezes that breathe themselves into seedling and herbage,
Blithesome, in truth, is the blossom that bloometh therefrom,
When the drenching dews drip down from the leaves,
Biding the blissful beams of the bright sunnė.
Next harvest hies him, and hardens the grain,
He warns it ere winter to wax full ripe;
The dust of the drought he driveth aloft,
From the face of the fields it flies full high;
Wild winds of the welkin war with the sunnė,
The leaves of the woodland lie low on the ground,
And all grey is the grass that all green was so lately.
Then all ripens and rotteth that rose up in flower,
To know winter is nearing, now need we to tell us
No sage.
When Michaelmas's moon
Was come with winter's gage,
Then thought Gawayne full soon
Of his dread pilgrimage.

SIR GAWAYNE'S JOURNEY

(From *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*)

Now wends he his way through the wild tracts of Logrès, [*Eng-*
Sir Gawayne on God's hest, and no game he thought it. *land*]
Oft alone he alights, and lies down at night-fall
Where he found not before him fare to his liking.
O'er field and in forest, no friend but his horse,
No comrade but God for counsel had he,
Till at length he draws near to the land of North Wales.
All Anglesey's isles on the left hand he leaves,
And fares o'er the fording hard by the foreland,
Over at Holy-head, till he had journeyed
To Wirral's wilderness, where few are dwelling
Who God or man with good hearts regard.
Fain would he find from men that he met with
News of a Knight in that neighborhood dwelling
Who garbed him in green, or of a green chapel.
All denied him with "nay", saying not in a lifetime
Wist they ever a wight that was of such huês
Of green.
The Knight rode ways most strange,
The rocky banks between,
And oft his cheer doth change, [*expression*]
Ere he that church hath seen.

Many cliffs he climbed over in countries far distant;
As out-cast, cut off from companions, he rides.
At each way through the water where he crossed over,
He a foe found before him,—but phantom it was,—
So foul and so fell that to fight it behoved him.
So many a marvel in these mountains he findeth,
'Twere tedious to tell the tenth of those wonders.
Now with serpents he struggles, and strives with wolves also,

Satyrs sometimes assail him, strange shapes from the rocks,
Both with bulls and with bears, and with boars otherwhiles,
Or with monsters that meet him, huge men of the fells.
He was fearless, unfalt'ring and faithful to God,
Or he doubtless had died, for death threatened him oft.
But war he could wage, yet the winter was worse,
When the cold chilling waters, from storm-clouds down pouring
Would freeze ere they fell on the fallow beneath
Near slain with the sleet, he slept in his armour,
More nights than enough on the naked rocks,
While clattering o'er the cliff the cold brook comes down,
And high o'er his head hard icicles hang.
Thus in perils and pains and plights the most hard,
Till Christmas eve cometh, he keepeth alone
His quest.
Humbly the Knight, that tide,
Besought of Mary Blest,
That she his way would guide
Unto some place of rest.

At morn by a mountain he merrily rideth,
Through a woodland full wild that was wondrous and deep,
High hills on each hand, with a holt stretching under
Of hoar oaks full huge, a hundred together;
And tangled thickets of thorn and of hazel,
With shaggy robes of rough ragged mosses;
Many birds sit unblithely on the bare twigs,
And piteously pipe for pain of the cold.
The rider on Gringolet rideth beneath them
Through mire and marshes, a man all alone,
Perturbed in his toil lest to him t'were forbidden
To share in His service, who, on that same night,
Was born of a maid, all our sorrows to cure.
Therefore sighing he said: "I beseech Thee, O Lord,
And Mary, mildest mother so dear,
Some shelter to show me, some spot to hear mass

And thy matins at morn, this meekly I beg,
And thus promptly I pray, my *Pater*, and *Ave*, 65
And *Creed*."
So as he rode he prayed,
And mourned for his misdeed,
The holy sign he made,
And said: "Christ's Cross me speed."

II. MORAL AND RELIGIOUS VERSE

POEMA MORALE

(Before 1200)

I am now older than I was, in wisdom and in lore,
I wield more power than I did: were but my wisdom more.
Too long have I been a child in word and eke in deed;
Yet though I am in winters old, too young am I in heed.
Methinks my life a useless one, like that I've always led; 5
And when I ponder on it well, full sorely do I dread,
For almost all that I have done befits unto childhood,
And very late have me bethought, unless God helps to good.
I've spoken many idle words since I to speak was able,
Full many deeds I've done that now seem most unprofitable. 10
And almost all that I once liked is hateful now to me;
Who follows over much his will, himself deceiveth he.
I might in truth have better done had my ill-luck been less;
Now that I would, I can no more for age and helplessness.
Old Age his foot-step on me stole ere I his coming wist; 15
I could not see before me for the dark smoke and the mist.
Laggards we are in doing good, in evil all too bold;
Men stand in greater fear of man than of the Christ of old.
Who doth not well the while he may, repenting oft shall rue
The day when men shall mow and reap what they erstwhile
did strew. 20

Orm

ORMULUM

(About 1215-1220)

Now, brother Walter, brother mine
  After the fleshes kind,
And brother mine in Christendom
  Through baptism and through truth,
And brother mine eke in God's house,
  Once more, in a third way,
Since that we two have taken both
  One book of rules to follow,
Under the canons' rank and life
  So as Saint Austin set;
I now have done even as thou bad'st,
  Forwarding to thy will,
I now have turned into English
  The Gospel's holy lore,
After that little wit that me
  My Lord and God has lent.
Thou thoughtest how that it might well
  To mickle profit turn,
If English folk, for love of Christ,
  It readily would learn
And follow it, fulfilling it
  With thought, with word, with deed,
And therefore yearnedst thou that I
  This work for thee should work;
And I have forwarded it for thee,
  And all through help of Christ.

Thomas of Hales

A LOVE LETTER

(Before 1226)

A maid of Christ entreateth me
That I for her a love-rune write
By which most plainly she may see
The way to choose a faithful knight;
One that to her shall loyal be
And guard and keep her by his might.
Never will I deny her plea,
To teach her this be my delight.

Maiden, thou mayest well behold
How this world's love is but a race
Beset with perils manifold
Fickle and ugly, weak and base.
Those noble knights that once were bold
As breath of wind pass from their place,
Under the mold now lie they cold,
Wither like grass and leave no trace.

There's none so rich, nor none so free,
But that he soon shall hence away.
Nothing may ever his warrant be,
Gold, nor silver, nor ermine gay.
Though swift, his end he may not flee,
Nor shield his life for a single day.
Thus is this world, as thou may'st see,
Like to the shadow that glides away.

This world all passes as the wind,
When one thing comes, another flies;
What was before, is now behind;
What was held dear, we now despise
Therefore he does as doth the blind
That in this world would claim his prize.
This world decays, as ye may find;
Truth is put down and wrong doth rise.

The love that may not here abide,
Thou dost great wrong to trust to now;
E'en so it soon shall from thee glide,
'Tis false, and brittle, and slight, I trow,
Changing and passing with every tide,
While it lasts it is sorrow enow;
At end, man wears not robe so wide
But he shall fall as leaf from bough.

Paris and Helen, where are they
That were so bright and fair of face?
Amadas, Tristram, did they stay,
Or Iseult with her winsome grace?
Could mighty Hector death delay,
Or Caesar, high in pride of place?
They from this earth have slipped away
As sheaf from field, and left no trace

They are as though they never were,
Of them are many wonders said,
And it is pity for to hear
How these were slain with tortures dread,
And how alive they suffered here;
Their heat is turned to cold instead,
Thus doth the world but false appear,
The foolish trust it,—lo! 'tis sped.

For though a mighty man he were
As Henry, England's king by birth,
Though he as Absalom were fair,
Whose peer lived not in all the earth,
Yet of his pride he's soon stripped bare,
At last he'll fetch not a herring's worth,
Maid, if thou mak'st true love thy care
I'll show thee a love more true than earth.

Ah! maiden sweet, if thou but knew
All the high virtues of this knight!
He is fair and bright of hue,
Mild, with face of shining light,
Meet to be loved and trusted too,
Gracious, and wise beyond man's sight,
Nor through him wilt thou ever rue,
If thou but trust in his great might.

He is the strongest in the land;
As far as man can tell with mouth,
All men lie beneath his hand,
East, and West, and North, and South;
Henry, King of Engèlland,
He holds of him and to him boweth
His messenger, at his command,
His love declares, his truth avow'th.

Speak'st thou of buildings raised of old,
Wrought by the wise king Solomon,
Of jasper, sapphires, and fine gold,
And of many another stone?
His home is fairer by many fold
Than I can tell to any one;
'Tis promised, maid, to thee of old,
If thou wilt take him for thine own.

It stands upon foundations sound,
So built that they shall never fall;
Nor miner sap them underground,
Nor shock e'er shake the eternal wall;
Cure for each wound therein is found,
Bliss, joy, and song, fill all that hall.
The joys that do therein abound
Are thine, thou may'st possess them all.

There friend from friend shall never part,
There every man shall have his right;
No hate is there, no angry heart,
Nor any envy, pride or spite;
But all shall with the angels play
In peace and love in heavenly light.
Are they not, maid, in a good way,
Who love and serve our Lord aright?

No man may Him ever see
As He is in all His might,
And without pure bliss may be
When he knows the Lord of light.
With Him all is joy and glee,
He is day without a night.
Will he not most happy be
Who may bide with such a knight?

This writing, maiden that I send,
Open it, break seal and read;
Wide unroll, its words attend,
Learn without book each part with speed.
Then straight to other maidens wend
And teach it them to meet their need;
Whoso shall learn it to the end
In sooth 'twill stand him in good stead.

And when thou sittest sorrowing,
Draw forth the scroll I send thee here,
And with sweet voice its message sing,
And do its bidding with good cheer.
To thee this does His greeting bring;
Almighty God would have thee near;
He bids thee come to His wedding,
There where he sits in Heaven's high sphere.

THE DEBATE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL

(13th Century)

(*Author unknown*)

As once I lay in winter's night,
Sunk deep in sleep before the day,
Methought I saw a wondrous sight;
Upon a bier a body lay.
It once had been a wilful Knight,
Scant service he to God did pay;
Clean lost had he his lifes light,
The ghost was out and must away.

When the ghost it needs must go,
It turned aside and near it stood;
Beheld the body it came fro
Most sorrowful in frightened mood.
It said: "Woe! woe! and welawoe!
Woe worth thy flesh, thy foulė blood,
Wretched body, why liest thou so
That wert but now so wild and wode? [*passionate*]

"Thou that once wert wont to ride
High on horse with head un-bowed,
Famed for prowess far and wide,
As a lion fierce and proud,

Where is all thy mighty pride,
And thy voice that rang so loud,
Why dost thou there all naked bide,
Stitched within that wretched shroud?

"Where is now thy broidered weed,
Thy sumpters, bearing thy rich bed? [*pack-horses*]
Thy palfreys and thy battle-steed
Which at thy side thy Squire led?
Thy crying hawks of chosen breed,
And the hounds that thou hast fed?
Methinks, God recks not of thy need,
For all thy friends are from thee fled.

"Where are thy castles and thy towers,
Thy chambers and thy stately halls,
Painted with many-coloured flowers,
And thy richè robès all?
Thy downy quilts and covertures,
Thy sendals and thy purple palls?
Wretch! full dark is now thy bower,
To-morrow thou therein shalt fall!"

. . . . . .

Now when the ghost with gruesome cheer [*expression*]
Thus had made his mournful moan,
The corpse, stretched stark upon the bier,—
A ghastly thing thus left alone,—
Its head and neck did strait uprear;
As a sick thing it 'gan to groan,
And said: "Where art thou now, my fere, [*companion*]
My ghost, that quite art from me gone?

"God shaped thee in His image fair,
And gave to thee both wit and skill;

He trusted me unto thy care
To guide according to thy will.
In witchcrafts foul I had no share,
Nor wist I what was good nor ill,
But like dumb beast thy yoke I bare
And as thou bad'st I must fulfill.

"Placed thy pleasures to fulfill,
Both at even and at morn,
I was in thy keeping still
From the time that thou wast born.
Thou, that knewest good and ill,
Surely should'st have judged beforn
Of my pride, my foolish will;
Now alone thou liest forlorn."

The ghost it said: "Body, be still,
Where learned'st thou this moral air?
Givest thou me harsh words and ill
And liest like swollen wine-skin there?
Thinkest thou, wretch, though thou shalt fill
With thy foul flesh a noisome lair,
That from the deeds thou didest ill
Thou shalt be freed, nor judgment bear?

"Thinkest now thy rest to win
Where thou liest rotting in the clay?
Though thou be rotten bone and skin,
And blowen with the wind away,
Yet limb and joint thou shalt come in
Again to me on doomèsday,
Together we shall pass within
To Court, to take our bitter pay.

"You to my sway did God commit,
But when you thought on evil deed,

Hard in your teeth you held the bit,
And did all things that I forbede.
Sin you obeyed, you drew to it,
To ease, and shame, and lust, and greed;
I fought you hard with strength and wit,
But aye you followed your own rede.

"I bade you mind your spirit's need;
But matins, mass, and evensong
You put aside for other deed,
And called them vain, with foolish tongue.
To wood and field you chose to speed,
Or run to Court to do men wrong;
Except for pride or greater meed
Small good you did your whole life long."

. . . . . .

The Body, answering, said its say:
"O Soul! thou hast done wrong in this,
All the blame on me to lay,
Now thou hast lost the highest bliss.
Where did I go, by wood or way,
Where sat, or stood, or did amiss,
But 'neath thine eye I went each day;
Well knowest thou the truth of this.

. . . . . .

"I should have been but as the sheep,
Or like the dumb and herded kine,
That eat, and drink, and sprawl, and sleep,
And passed my pain—like slaughtered swine;
Gold had I never cared to keep,
Nor known that water was not wine,
Nor been thrust down to hell's black deep,
But for thee,—Soul,—the fault was thine."

The ghost replied: "There is no doubt
Thy part was always me to bear:
Needs must this be, I was without
Or hand or foot wert thou not there:
Save as thou carriedst me about
I could do naught, nor least act share;
I must before thee bend devout,
To do aught else I did not dare.

"Of one woman born and bred,
Body, thou and I were twain;
Together fostered fair and fed
Till thou couldst walk and speak thee plain;
Thee gently, moved by love, I led,
Nor dared I ever give thee pain.
To lose thee was my sorest dread,
Knowing I'd get no more again.

"I saw you fair in flesh and blood,
And all my love to you I gave;
That you should thrive methought was good,
Soft ease and rest I let you have;
This wrought in you rebellious mood,
You rushed to sin as impulse drave;
To fight against you did no good
You bore me with you as your slave.

. . . . . .

"Well warned wert thou of this before,
And told we both should judgment have;
All this you scorned as foolish lore,
Yet watched thy kin go down to grave.
Thou didst all that the world thee bade,
Each thing thy eager flesh might crave,
And I allowed it, (I was mad!),
Thou wert the master, I the slave."

[The Body speaks]

"Thinkest thou, Ghost, thou gainest aught
To quit thee from thy blame withal,
By saying that thou, so nobly wrought,
Wast forced to serve me as my thrall?
Nothing I did and nothing sought,
Ne'er plundered, stole, ne'er sinned at all,
But first in thee arose the thought.
Abide it who abide it shall!

"How wist I what was wrong or right,
What to take, what cast away,
Save as thou brought'st it to my sight,
Thou o'er whom wisdom should bear sway?
Thus, trained by you in base delight
Companion of your pleasures gay,
Then did I ill with all my might,
Once more to have my wicked way.

"But haddest thou,—Christ grant 'twere true,—
Given me hunger, thirst, and cold,
And taught me good that no good knew,
When I in evil was so bold,
Then, what I learned in youth from you,
I had held fast when I was old;
You let me North and South roam through,
And take my pleasures uncontrolled."

Then wept the ghost most bitterly,
"Body, alas, alas!" (it said).
"That e'er of old I lovéd thee!
Lost was the love I on thee stayed;
Falsely you feigned a love for me,
And me a house of glass you made;

I gave you pleasures trustfully,
You, traitor, still my trust betrayed.

. . . . . .

"No longer, Body, may I dwell,
No longer stand to speak with thee;
Now I hear the hell-hounds yell,
And fiendês more than man may see;
They come to fetch me down to hell,
No whither may I from them flee;
And thou shalt come with flesh and fell
At doomêsday to dwell with me."

Almost before the words were said,
That told it wist where it must go,
Burst in at once in sudden raid
A thousand devils and yet mo.
And when they once had on him laid
Their savage claws, they tare him so
He was in torment, sore afraid,
Tossed, tugged and tousled to and fro.

For they were shaggy, shock-haired, tailed,
With bulgy bumps upon the back,
Their claws were sharp, they were long-nailed,
No limb there was but showed some lack.
The ghost was right and left assailed
By many a devil foul and black;
Crying for mercy naught availed
When God his vengeance due must take.

. . . . . .

Instead of colt for him to ride,
Straightway a curséd devil came,
That grisly grinned and yawnéd wide

Out from his throat flared tongues of flame.
The saddle on his back and side
Was stuck with pikes to pierce and maim,
'T'was as a heckle to bestride,
And all a-glow with scorching flame.

Upon that saddle was he slung,
As though to ride in tournament;
A hundred devils on him hung,
Hither and thither him they sent;
He with hot spears was pierced and stung,
And sore with hooks of iron rent;
At every stroke the sparkles sprung
As they from blazing brand were sent.

When he the ride had ridden at last,
Fast to that fearful saddle bound,
As hunted fox he down was cast,
The worrying hell-hounds close him round,
They rend him, trembling and aghast,
And harry him towards hell's dark bound;
A man might trace the way they passed
By blood-stains on the trampled ground.

They bid him then his horn to blow,
To urge on Bauston and Bevís,
His hounds well wont his call to know,
For they would shortly sound the *pris*.
A hundred devils, in a row,
Drag him with ropes toward the abyss,
The loathly flames are seen below,
The mouth of hell it was, I wis.

When once that dread abode is won,
The fiends set up so loud a yell
That earth it opens up anon;

Smother and smoke rise from that cell,
Both of foul pitch and of brimstone,
Men five miles off can smell that smell;
Woe grips and holds that wretched one
Who scents from far that scent of hell.

The foulė fiends, with eager grin,
Seize on the soul, and, whirling it,
With might and main they hurl it in,
Down, down, into the devil's pit,
Then, they themselves plunge straight therein,
To darkness with no sunshine lit,
Earth closes on that house of sin,
The dungeon-doors shut fast on it.

When they had gone, that loathsome brood,
To hell's black pit, ere it was day,
On every hair the sweat-drops stood
For fright and fear as there I lay:
To Jesus Christ, in chastened mood,
Yearning I cried,—and dreaded aye
That those fierce fiends so foul and lewd,
Would come to carry me away.

Then thanked I Him who passed death's gate,
Who unto man such mercy bore,
My shield 'gainst many an evil fate,
And felt my sins as ne'er before.
All ye who sin, I charge you straight
To shrive you and repent you sore;
For sin was never sinned so great
That Christ's wide mercy was not more.

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

(About 1250)

(*Author unknown*)

Once within a summer's dale,
In a very secret vale,
Heard I 'gainst each other rail
Hoary Owl and Nightingale.
That strife was stiff, and stark, and strong,
Now 'twas soft, now loud it rung,
And each bird would the other flout,
And all the evil mood let out;
And each said of the other's way
The very worst she knew to say;
Indeed, about each other's song
The strife they waged was very strong.
The Nightingale began the speech
From her corner in a beech:
She sat upon a pleasant bough,
Blossoms about there were enow,
Where in a thick and lonely hedge,
Mingled soft shoots and greenest sedge.
She, gladdened by the bloomy sprays,
Varied her song in many ways.
Rather it seemed the joy I heard
Of harp or pipe than song of bird.
Such strains, methought, must rather float
From harp or pipe than feathered throat.
Then, from a trunk that stood hard-by,
The Owl in turn made her reply,
O'er it the ivy grew apace;
There made the Owl her dwelling-place.
The Nightingale, who saw her plain,
Surveyed the bird with high disdain,
Filled with contempt she viewed the Owl,

Whom all men loathsome deem and foul.
"Monster," she cried, "take wings and flee,
I am the worse for sight of thee,
Truly, at thy black looks of yore
Full oft my song I've given o'er;
My tongue grows weak, my courage flies
When you appear before mine eyes,
I'm more inclined to spit than sing
At sound of thy harsh sputtering."
The Owl abode till it grew late.
Eve came, she could no longer wait;
Her heart began to swell and strain
Till scarce she could her breath contain.
Half choked with rage, these words she flung:
"What think'st thou now about my song?
Think'st thou in song I have no skill
Merely because I cannot trill?
Often to wrath thou movest me,
And dost abuse me shamefully.
If in my claws I held thee fast,—
And so, mayhap, I shall at last,—
And thou wert down from off thy spray
Then should'st thou sing another way."
Then made the Nightingale reply:
"If I avoid the open sky,
And shield myself in places bare,
Nothing for all thy threats I care;
While in my hedge secure I sit,
I reck not of your threats a whit.
I know you cruel to devour
All helpless things within your power,
Wreaking your wrath in evil way
On smaller birds where'er you may.
Hated of all the feathered rout,
The birds combine to drive you out;
Shrieking and scolding after you,

They hard upon your flight pursue.
The tit-mouse, if she had her will,
Would tease you and would work you ill.
Hateful to look upon thou art
In many ways, and every part;
Thy body's short, thy neck is small,
Thy head is greater far than all;
Thine eyes coal-black are staring wide
As though with woad they had been dyed;
You stare as though you'd like to bite
Each thing your cruel claws could smite;
Just like an awl that has been crooked,
Your bill is stiff and sharp and hooked,
With it you hoot both oft and long,
This passes with you for a song.
You threaten me, longing to clasp
My flesh and crush me in your grasp;
More fit for thee would be a frog,
That sits beneath the mill-wheel's cog,
Or snails, and mice, and creatures foul,—
Such are the sort fit for an Owl.
By day you sit, by night take wing,
Knowing you are an eerie thing;
That thou art loathsome and unclean
From thine own nest is plainly seen,
And also by thy foul young brood,
Which thou dost feed on foulest food."

[After a prolonged controversy, the Nightingale speaks again:]

"Owl," she said, "why dost thou so?
Thou sing'st in winter welawo!
Thou sing'st as doth a hen in snow,
And all she sings is but for woe:
Thou sing'st in winter's wrath and gloom,
In summer thou art ever dumb.

It is but for thy foolish spite
That thou with us canst not be bright;
For thee consuming envy burns
When to the land our bliss returns.
Thou'rt like some cross-grained, crabbed wight,
Who turns black looks on each delight,
Ready to grudge it, and to lower
If men are happy for an hour;
He wishes rather to espy
The tears of grief in each man's eye,
Let the mob fight, he does not care
Though each man pulls the other's hair.
E'en so thou dost upon thy side,
For when the snow lies thick and wide,
And every creature has his sorrow,
Thou sing'st from night-fall till the morrow.
But I, all bliss with me doth wake,
Each heart is gladder for my sake,
All live in joy when I am here,
All wait for me to reappear.
The blossom 'gins to spring and sprede
Upon the tree and o'. the mede,
The lily, with her face of snow,
Welcometh me, as well you know,
And bids me, with her aspect fair,
To fly to her, and greet her there.
So too, with ruddy face, the rose,
That from the thorny briar grows,
Bids me to sing in bush and grove,
A joyous carol for her love."

Robert Manning, of Brunne

IN PRAISE OF WOMAN

(From *Handlyng Synne*, about 1303)

Nothing is to man so dear
As woman's love in good manére.
A good womán is manès bliss,
When her love right and steadfast is.
No solace is there 'neath the sky,
Of all that man may name or try,
That man to joy so greatly moves
As a good woman that truly loves.
Nor dearer is none in all God's herd
Than a chaste woman with lovely word.

CURSOR MUNDI

(About 1320-1325)

(*Author unknown*)

THE PROLOGUE

Man yearneth rimès for to hear,
And romances of strange mattère,
Of Alisaundere the conquerour,
Of Julius Caesar the emperour,
Of Greece and Troy the strangė strife
Where many thousand lost their life;
Of Brut, that hero bold of hand,

First conqueroúr of Engéland;
Of King Arthour that was so rike [*mighty*]
Whom no one in his time was like;
Of wonders that his knights befell
Adventures many as I've heard tell,
As Gawain, Kay, and others stable,
For they were men of the Round Table;
How Charles and Roland waged their fight,
With Sarcens they no troth would plight;
Of Tristrem and his dear Ysote
How he for her became a sote; [*madman*]
Of Joneck and of Ysambrase,
Of Ydoine and of Amadase,
Stories alsó of sundry things,
Of princes, prelates, and of kings,
Many songs of storied rime,
English, Frankish, and Latine.
To read and hear each one is prest
Of whatsoe'er he likes the best;
The wise man will of wisdom hear,
The fool to folly draws him near;
The wrong to hear of right is loath,
And pride with buxomness is wroth. [*humility*]

. . . . . .

But by the fruit the wise may see
Of what vertú is every tree.
All sorts of fruit that man shall find
Must draw from out the root their kind;
From goodly pear-trees come good pears,
Worse tree, the worse the fruit it bears.
That I should speak from this same tree
Betokens, man, both me and thee;
This fruit betokens all our deeds,
Both good and ill who rightly reads.
Our dedés in our hearts take root,

Whether they be for bale or boot;
For by the thing man draweth untó
For good or ill men shall him know.

All this world, ere I have done,
With Christ's help shall I over-run,
And tell some stories principál,
For no man may relate them all.
But since no work may long endure
That stands not on foundation sure,
This same work, therefore, shall I found
Upon a wondrous, steadfast, ground;
That is the Holy Trinity
That all has wrought with His beautý.
Unto Him first I turn my face,
And then His handywork I'll trace:
Of the angels first that fell,
And next I will of Adam tell,
Of his offspring and of Noé,
And somewhat of his sonnès three;
Of Abraham and of Isáac,
That holy were withouten make; [*wi'hout an equal*]
After shall I tell to you
Of Jacob and of Esau too;
Then should there be thereafter told
How that Joséph was bought and sold;
How Moses 'midst the Jews arose,
That Goddès folk to lead them chose;
How God the law to him did give
By which the Jewish folk should live.
Of Saul the king, and David too
How he Goliath fought and slew;
And next of Solomon the Wise,
How craftily he did justíce;
How Christ came down through prophecy,
And how He came His folk to buy.

[The author next goes on to enumerate various other matters of which he proposes to treat, such as the birth of Christ, the destruction of the innocents, the flight into Egypt, and so on through the gospel story. After this outline of the general plan and scope of his work he concludes his prologue as follows:—]

These are the subjects put in place
I think within this book to trace;
Speaking but shortly of each deed,
For there are many tales to speed.
Useful, methinks, it were to man
To know himself how he began;
How he at first was born and bred,
How o'er the earth his offspring spread;
Both of the first and of the last,
And in what course this world is past.
Those things that Holy Church doth state
In this same book I now translate.
In English tongue 'tis all made clear
For love of all the English here;
English folk of Engèland,
For the commons to understand.
French rimes are there in this land
To be found on every hand;
French is wrought for Frankish man,
What is for him that no French can?
The nation of England old
The Englishmen in common hold;
The speech that man with most may speed
Must be the speech that men most need.
Seldom was by any chance
Praised the English tongue in France;
Do we the same to their languáge
Methinks we do them no outráge.
For unlearned Englishman I spell,
That understandeth what I tell,

And specially I those address
That all their lives in idleness
On trifles waste and beggars' lies,
To them I say: "Take care, be wise,
And well unto my words attend,
And all your way with might amend."
Ill have they who in spending spend,
And find no fruit thereof at end.

. . . . . .

Now from this prologue we will blinne [*cease*]
And in Christ's name our book begin:
Cursor o'World men ought it call,
For almost it o'er runs it all.
Take we our beginning than [*then*]
From Him who all the world began.

Richard Rolle

(About 1300-1349)

HEAVEN

(From *The Prick of Conscience*)

(About 1340)

All manner of joyes are in that stede:
There is life without any death;
And there is youth without any eild; [*age*]
And there is all kind of wealth to wield;
And there is rest without any travail;

And there is all good that never shall fail;
And there is peace without any strife;
And there is all manner of liking of life;
And there is aye summer full bright to see,
And never more winter in that countríe:
And there is more worship and honóur,
Than ever had king or emperour:
And there is great melody of angels' song,
And there is praising them among:
And there is all manner friendship that may be,
And there is ever perfect love and charitie.
And there is wisdom without folly,
And there is honesty without villany.
All these a man may joys of Heaven call:
But yet the most sovereign joy of all
Is sight of Goddès brightè face,
In whom resteth all manner grace.

THE PEARL

(About 1370)

(*Author unknown*)

I

Pearl, princes prize, and men essay
To safely close in gold most clear!
Of Orient pearls, I surely say,
Never was found its precious peer;
So round, so radiant in array,
So small, so smooth its surface fair.
Whenever I judged of jewels gay
I set it singly in singlére. [*apart*]
Alas! I lost it in an arbére: [*arbor*]

Through grass to ground it from me got.
I droop, death-stricken by love-daungére, [*bondage*]
For my own pearl without a spot.

II

Since, in that spot it from me sprung
Oft have I waited, wishing that weal [*bliss*]
That once was wont dispel my wrong,
Lift up my lot, my spirit heal.
But now, struck through with sorrows strong,
Its loss my burning breast must feel.
Yet heard I never so sweet a song
As the still hour let to me steal.
Strange thoughts their shapes but half reveal,
As I muse on its colour, all clad in clay.
O mould! thou marrest a wondrous jewél,
My precious pearl that hath slipped away.

III

Lo! there sweet spices needs must spread
When so much wealth to earth has run;
Flowers golden, blue, and red,
Shine full sheen against the sun.
Never may fruit and flower fade
Where my pearl sank down in the earth-mould dun;
For each grass must grow from seed-grain dead,
No wheat were else for harvest won;
From good each good is aye begun;
So precious a seed must perish not;
Spices must spring from this chosen one,
From this precious pearl without a spot.

IV

To this spot that I in speech expoun [*declare*]
I entered, in that arbour green,

In August, in a high sesóun,
When corn is cut with sickle keen.
On a mound where once my pearl rolled down
Fell shadows of flowers shining and sheen,—
Gillyfleur, ginger, and gromyloun, [*gromwell*]
And peonies powdered all between.
If it were seemly but to be seen,
Still sweeter the scent it gave, I wot,
Where dwells that blesséd one I ween,
My precious pearl without a spot.

V

Prone in that place, wild hands I pressed,
Clutched as with freezing cold, I fought;
Grief grew to tumult in my breast,
Reason nor calm, nor comfort brought.
I plained my pearl that earth possessed
And vainly strove with struggling thought.
Though Christ's compassion offered rest,
My wretched will against it wrought.
I fell upon the flowery ground,
Sweet odours o'er my senses streamed,
Till, sunk in depths of sleep profound,
About my spotless pearl I dreamed.

VI

From thence my soul sprang far in space,
My body on ground abode in sweven. [*sleep*]
My ghost is gone by Goddès grace,
Through ways unknown and wondrous driven.
I wist not in this world the place,
But I felt me rapt past great rocks riven:
Towards a forest I turned my face
Where splendid cliffs soared high to heaven
Their light no man may well believen,

For a glistering glory from them gleamed;
The loom no silks has ever given
With colours so clear as from them streamed.

VII

Adornèd was each hilly side
With christal cliffs of clearest kind.
The forests fair about them bide
With tree-bolls blue as blue of Ind;
Their leaves, like silver's burnished pride,
A-flutter in the fragrant wind
With glinting gleams show glorified,
In shimmering splendors half-defined.
The gravel, that each foot may grind,
Was precious pearl of Orient,
Sunlight itself seemed dull and blind
Beside that land of wonderment.

VIII

The splendor of those hill-sides rare
Made my glad heart its grief forgete;
The fruits so fresh of fragrance were
I was fed-full with odours sweet.
Birds flitted through that forest fair
Of flaming hues, both small and grete;
No citole's string nor gittermere [*zithern-player*]
Their mirthful music might repeat.
For, when these birds their wingès beat,
Then sing they all with sweet concent.
No man knows rapture so complete
As sight and sound together lent.

IX

The woods are rich in radiant guise
Where'er by Fortune led, I fare,
And shining glories glad mine eyes,
That no man may with tongue declare.
I wander on in happy wise,
For steepest cliff seems harmless there.
The farther I fared the fairer 'gan rise
Meads bright with bloom, and spice, and pear,
Green-bordered brooks, and river fair
Its banks as thread of finest gold.
Win I at last to a water rare;—
Dear Lord! 'twas lovely to behold.

X

The margent of that wondrous deep
Was shining bank of beryl bright.
Sweetly the sliding waters sweep,
With a murmurous music they take their flight.
The bottom gleaming stones doth keep,
That glow through the lucent depths like light,
Or shining stars, which while men sleep
Wink in the welkin on Winter's night.
Each shining stone that shimmered to sight
Was sapphire, or some jewel rare,
They lit the deep with living might,
So clear that lovely land and fair.

XI

The rich array of down and dales,
Of wood and water and wide plains,
Bred in me bliss, abated bales,
Released my stress, destroyed my pains.

Along the stream that strongly hales [*flows*]
All rapt I roved, brimfull my brains.
The farther I followed those wat'ry vales
The greater the joy at my glad heart strains.
Though Fortune's gifts no force constrains,
Lend she solace or sorrows sore,
The wight who once her favour gains
Strives ever to win more and more.

XII

Far more of bliss glowed in such guise
Than I could tell if time I had;
For mortal heart may not suffice
For tenth part of that rapture glad.
I thought in truth that Paradise
Lay just beyond those bright banks brade. [*broad*]
The waters, methought, as bounds arise
Twixt garden and garden, between them made.
Beyond the brook, by slope and shade,
Stands the Holy City, beyond the shore.
But the water was deep, I durst not wade,
And ever my longing grew more and more.

XIII

Mair and mair, and yet much mair
I longed beyond that stream to stand;
For if 'twas fair where I did fare
Far fairer gleamed that farther land.
Stumbling I strove, looked here and there
To find a ford, on every hand;
But of greater perils I grew aware
The longer I searched that shining strand.

And yet, it seemed I must burst the band,
So strong was the call of that distant shore.
When lo! the sight mine eyes next scanned
Stirred my strained spirit more and more.

XIV

A marvel 'gan my ghost confound;
I saw, beyond that merry mere,
A cliff, from whose clear depths profound
Streamed lights that lit the golden air.
Beneath, a child sate on the ground,
A maid of mien full debonair;
White, shining garments girt her round;—
I knew,—I had seen her other-where.
As gold in threads that men may shear,
So sheen she shone upon that shore.
The longer I looked upon her there
The surer I knew her, more and more.

XV

And as I fed on her fair face,
And searched her child-like figure o'er,
Pure gladness did my soul embrace,
That I had lacked so long before.
To call her would I fain find grace,
But stunned I stood, bewildered sore;
I saw her in so strange a place
That dazed, the sight no meaning bore.
She lifts her brow, well-known of yore,
Her face as smooth as ivory;
My wild dismay grows more and more,
My soul is stung with what I see.

XVI

Stronger than longing, fear arose;
I stood quite still and durst not call;
Wide-eyed I wait, my lips I close,
As mute as hooded hawk in hall.
That sight so strange, so spectral rose,
I feared the end that might befall;
The dread lest she escape me grows,
Or vanish ere I could forestall.
Then she, whose shining lightened all,
So soft, so smooth, so pure, so slight,
Rose up robed in array royál,
A pearl, in precious pearlés dight.

XVII

Pearls that would grace a kingly power,
A man might there by grace have seen,
When fresh and fair as lily-flower,
Adown the shore she stepped, I ween.
Her linen robe, a royal dower,
Flowed free; its lustrous borders been
Purfled with pearls: before that hour
Such sight mine eyes had never seen.
Her flowing sleeve-laps showed full sheen
With pearls, in double border dight:
Her kirtle, where it showed between,
With precious pearls gleamed pure and bright.

. . . . . .

XX

All rich in pearls that rare one bright
Drew near the shore beyond the flood;

From here to Greece no gladder wight
Than I, when by the brink she stood.
Nearer than niece or aunt, of right
I found in her my joy and good.
Then low she bowed her figure slight,
Cast by her crown in happy mood,
And as I looked, I understood
And heard her greet me full of grace.
Dear Lord! who me with life endued,
'Twas worth it all to see her face.

XXI

"O Pearl," I cried, "in pearlés dight,
Art thou that pearl that I have plained [*bewailed*]
Much missed by me alone, at night?
What longing have I long sustained
Since into grass you slipped from sight.
Pensive, oppressed, I pine sore pained,
While you, at rest in realm of light,
In Paradise a home have gained.
What Weird has thither my gem constrained,
And brought me this grief and great daungére!
Since we in twain were torn and twained,
I have been a joyless jewelér."

XXII

That jewel there, with jewels graced,
Lifted her face with eyes of grey,
Her crown of orient pearl replaced,
And grave and slow did sweetly say:—
"Sir, you mistake and speak in haste
To say your pearl is all away;
In coffer is it safely placed.
Shut safe within this garden gay,

To dwell forever there, and play
Where sin and sorrow come never near,
This spot were thy treasure house, parfay,
If thou wert a gentle jewelér.

XXIII

"But jeweler gentle, if thou dost give
Thy joy for a gem thou deemed'st dear,
In sooth thou dost but thyself deceive,
Vexéd in vain with a foolish fear.
For you lost but a rose, you may well believe,
That must flower and fade with the fading year,
Yet so wondrous a dust did that rose receive
That it proved a pearl in this shining sphere.
Though thou called'st thy Weird a thief, 'tis clear
From nought it has gained the great treasúre;
To blame the hand that has helped thee here
Shows thee a thankless jewelér."

[After the Dreamer has been urged to be patient, he sees the Maiden in Heaven and is filled with a great longing to join her.]

XXVII

Drawn by delight of eye and ear,
My yearning mood to madness grows;
I would be with my dear one there,
Though swift the severing current flows.
Nothing will harm me if on I fare,
Or lame me, methought, by baffling blows;
If I only the plunge in the stream can dare
I will swim the space though the waves oppose,
Or die in the deed. Yet a thought arose
Ere I plunged perverse in that water chill,
That stilled my impatience and brought repose
For I know it was not my Prince's will.

XXVIII

It pleased Him not that I should break
Through those marvellous marches unafraid,
As rash and rude my course I take
My daring onset is sudden stayed:
For as to the brink my way I make
With a start I find my vision fade,
And lo! in that arbour fair I wake,
My head on that selfsame hillock laid
On that spot where my pearl into earth once strayed.
Awe-strucken, silent, I sate alone
Then sighing deep to myself I said:
"May the Prince's will in all be done."

William Langland

(About 1332-1400)

PIERS THE PLOUGHMAN

PROLOGUE

In the season of summer, when soft was the sunnė,
I clad myself coarsely in a cloak as a shepherd;
In habit as an hermit unholy of workės,
Went I wide in this world wonders to hearė.
And on a May morning on Malvernė hillės,
A marvel amazed me, of magic methought.
I was weary, for-wandered, and went me to restė
Under a broad bank, by a burn-sidė;
And as I lay and leanėd, and looked in the waters,
I slumbered in a sleeping, it sounded so merry.
Then did I dream there a dream full of wonder;

In the wilds I was wandering, wist I not wherė.
As I looked to the Eastward a-loft to the sunnė,
I saw set on a summit a seemly tower;
A deep dale beneath and a dungeon thereinnė,
With deep ditches and dark, and dreadful to sight.
A fair field full of folk found I there between them,
With all manner of men the mean and the richė,
Working and wandering as the world asketh.
Some put them to ploughing, playing full seldom,
In setting and sowing swinking full hard, [*toiling*]
And winning what wasters with gluttony destroy.
And some put to pride, appareled them thereafter,
In fancies of fashion finely arrayėd.
To prayers and to penance put themselves many,
All for love of our Lord living full strict,
In the hope for to have heavenly blissė;
As anchorets and hermits that hold in their cellės,
In the world never wishing to wander about,
Or with bounteous abundance their bodies to please.
And some chose to chaffer, their chances to better,
For it seems to our sight that such men are most thriving.
And some to make merry, as minstrels are able,
And get gold with their glees, guiltless I deem them.
But jesters and jugglers, Judas's children,
Found out false fantasies and feigned themselves foolish,
Yet have wit at their will, to work were they willing.
That Paul preacheth of them prove now I dare not;
Qui loquitur turpiloquium is Lucifer's slave.
There bidders and beggars right busily wandered,
Their bags and their bellies with bread fully crammed;
There feigned want of food, and fought o'er the ale-cups,
In gluttony, God wot, go they to beddė,
And rise up with ribaldry, these Robert's men. [*vagabonds*]
So sleeping and sloth pursue them forever.
Pilgrims and palmers plighted them together
To seek for Saint James and the saintės at Rome,

Went forth in their way with many wise stories,
And had leave for to lie, all their life after.
I saw some that said they had sought out the saintés;
With tongues tempered to lie in each tale that they toldé,
More than to say sooth it seemed by their speech.
Hermits in an heap, with hookéd stavés
To Walsingham wended,—their wenches came after.
Great lubbers and lazy that loth were to swinké,
Clothed them in copes to be counted as "brethren",
In habit of hermit their ease for to have.
I found there the friars of all the four orders,
They preached to the people to profit themselves,
Glossing the Gospel as was their good pleasure.
For, coveting copes, they construed as they would.
For many of these masters may dress as it likes them,
For their money and merchandise marchen together.
For since Charity hath been chapman and chief to shrive lordés,
Many ferlies have fallen in a few yearés. [*marvels*]
If Holy Church and they hold not better together,
The most mischief on mold is mounting full fast. [*earth*]
There preachéd a Pardoner, a priest as he werė,
And brought forth a Bull with the Bishopés sealés,
And said that himself might assoilen them allė [*pardon*]
Of falseness in fasting, and vows they had broken.
The unlettered believed him and liked well his wordés,
Coming up to him kneeling and kissing his Bullés,
Then he banged them with his brevet and blearéd their eyen,
[*cheated them*]

. . . . . .

Thus they give up their gold these gluttons to help.

. . . . . .

Were the Bishop but blessed and worth both his earés,
He would send not his seal for deceiving the people.
But 'tis not at the Bishop that the boy preaches,

For Pardoner and priest part between them the silver,
And the poor of the parish may have what is left.
  Parsons and parish-priests plained to the Bishop,
As their parishes were poor since the pestilence time,
To have licence and leave at London to dwellė,
And they sing thus for simony,—for silver is sweet.
  Bishops and bachelors both masters and doctors,
That hold cures under Christ and have crowning [*parishes*]
    in token [*tonsured crowns*]
And sign that they should their parishioners shrivė,
And preach and to pray for them, and the poor feedė,
Are living in London, in Lent-time and other.
Some are serving the King, and his silver are taking,
In Exchequer and Chancery, claiming his debtės
Due from wards in the wardmote, both waifs and estrays,
And some serve as servants the lords and the ladies,
And instead of stewards they sit and condemn.
Their mass and their matins and most of the hours
Are done undevoutly; dread is at the last
That Christ in His Council should curse very many. [*Doomsday*]
  There hovered an hundred in hoodės of silkė,
Sergeants it seemed that served at the barrė,
Pleading for pennies and poundės the laws,
And naught for love of our Lord unloose their lips onės. [*once*]
Better measure the mist on Malvernė's hillės,
Than get a mum from these mouthės till money be showed.
  Baron and burgesses and bond-men also,
I saw there assembled, as ye shall hear after.
Bakers and brewers, and butchers a-many,
And weavers of woolens, and weavers of linen,
Tailors and tanners, and toilers of earth.
Masons and miners, and many a craft.
Of all living labourers leaped, some of each kind,
As ditchers and delvers that do their deeds ill,
And drag out the long day with "Dieu vous sauve, Dame,"
Cooks and their knavės cried "hotė pies, hotė!

Good gris and geese,—go now to dine,—go!" [*pigs*]
And unto them Taverners toldė the samė,
"White wine of Oseye, and red wine of Gascoigne [*Alsace*]
Of the Rhine and of Rochelle the roast to defy!"
And this I saw sleeping and seven times morė.

THE VISION

(From *Passus I.*)

What this mountain be-meaneth, and this dark dalė,
And this field full of folk, fair shall I show you.
A Lady most lovely in linen y-clothėd,
Came down from the cliff and clepėd me fair, [*spoke kindly to me*]
And saidė, "Son! sleepest thou? see'st thou this people,
How busy they be, all bestirred in a maze?
The most part of the people that pass now on earthė,
If they have the world's worship, they wish for no better,
Other Heaven than here, hold they as nothing."
I was feared of her face, fair though she werė,
And said, "Merci, Madame, what things may this meanė?"
"The tower on the top," quoth she, "truth is thereinnė,
And would that you wrought as His word teacheth.
He is Father of faith and formėd you allė,
Both your flesh and your face, and gave you fine wittės
To worship Him therewith the while ye are here."

. . . . . .

In my wit then I wondered what woman it werė,
That such wisė wordės of Holy Writ showėd,
And besought for His sake ere thence she departed,
She would tell me title who taught me so fair.
"Holy Church am I," quoth she, "thou should'st me knowė,
I fostered thee first and thy faith to thee taughtė,

And provided thy vows, my voice to obey,
And loyally love me, the while thy life dureth."
Then I crouched on my knees and cried for her gracė,
And prayėd her piteously pray for my sinnės,
And kindly to teach me on Christ to believe,
That His will I might work here, that wrought me a man.
"Teach me no treasure, but tell me this only,
How my soul I may save,—you that Saint are y-holden!"
"When all treasures are tried," quoth she, "Truth is the bestė;
On *Deus Caritas* I do it to deal with thee truly,
'Tis desire as dear-worth as dear God Himselfė,
Who is true in his tongue, and telleth naught elsė,
And the works doth withal and wills no man illė,
He is good by the Gospel on ground and abovė,
And is like to our Lord, by Saintė Lukė's wordės.
The clerkės that know this should ken it aboutė [*teach*]
For Christians proclaim it, and unchristians also."

. . . . . .

Thus I saw surely, by sight of the scriptures,
When all treasures are triėd, that Truth is the bestė

. . . . . .

"Nature tells thee," quoth she, "and teaches thy hertė
For to love liefer thy Lord than thyselfė.
No deadly sin to do, die though thou shouldest,
This I trowė be Truth; who can teach thee aught better,
Look thou suffer it to speak and so teach it after;
For this witnesseth His word, work thou thereafter,
For truth telleth that Love is triacle of Heaven; [*healing*]
No sin is seen in Him who useth that cure
And who wrought all His works with Love as He listed;
As most heavenly and mightiest to Moses He taught it,
The plant of all peace and most precious of virtues.

. . . . . .

For these are the wordės writ down in the Gospel,
Date et dabitur vobis, for I deal to you allė
Your grace and good hap, your wealth for to winnė,
And so know I, by nature, of that which you render.
This the lock is of Love, that lets out my gracė
To comfort the care-full, encumbered with sinning
Love is the liefest thing that our Lord asketh,
And eke the strait gate that goeth to Heaven.

III. SONGS AND POEMS

CANUTE'S SONG

Sweetly sang the monks in Ely
When Canute the king rowed by!
"Row, Knights, near the land
And hear the monks' sweet song."

CUCKOO SONG

(About 1250)

Summer is a-coming in,
Sing loud Cuckoo!
Groweth seed, and bloweth mead
And springeth the woodė noo
Sing Cuckoo!

Ewe bleatath after lamb,
Lows for her calf coo; [*cow*]
Bullock sterteth, buck verteth,
Merry sing Cuckoo!

Cuckoo, Cuckoo, well sing'st thou Cuckoo:
So cease thou never noo.
Sing Cuckoo, noo, sing Cuckoo!

SPRING SONG

(About 1300)

Spring is come to town with love
With blossom and with bird in grove,
That all this bliss now bringeth.
There are daisies in the dales;
Notes full sweet of nightingales;
Each bird song singeth.
The throstlecock out-sings them all;
Away is fled the Winter's thrall,
When woodrow springeth.
Then chanting birds in wondrous throng
Thrill out their joy the glades among
Till all the woodland ringeth.

The crimson rose is seen,
New leaves of tender green
With good-will grow,
The moon shines white and clear,
Fennel and Thyme are here,
Fair lilies blow.
Their mates the wild drakes find,
Each creature seeks his kind.
As stream that trickles slow,
We plain when life is drear,
For cruel love the tear
Unchecked must flow.

The moon sends forth her light,
The goodly sun shines bright,
  And birds sing well.
Dews drench the soft young grass,
And whispering lovers pass,
  Their tale to tell;
Snakes woo beneath the clod,
Women grow wondrous proud
  On field and fell.
If one shall say me no
Spring joy I will forgo
  And banished dwell.

SONG

Trolly, lolly, loly, lo,
Syng troly, lolo, lo.
My love is to the grene wode gone,
Now after will I go:
Syng trolly, loly, lo, lo, ly, lo.

SONG

Merry it is while summer lasts
  With small birds' song;
But now draw nigh the windy blasts
  And weather strong.
Ay, ay, but this night is long.
And I with abounding wrong
Keep sorrow, moans and fasts.

WINTER SONG

(About 1300)

Winter wakeneth all my care;
Leaves are few and branches bare;
Oft I sigh and mourn full sair,
When there cometh to my thought
All the world's joy, how it all goes to nought.

Now it is, now no more seen;
Gone as it had never been,
Many men say truth, I ween,
That all goes by God's will.
We all must surely die, though it seem ill.

All that green that graced the year,
Now is dying, brown and sere.
Jesus, let thy help be near
And shield us now from hell.
For I know not whither I shall go nor how long here shall dwell.

ALYSOUN

(About 1300)

Between soft March and April showers,
When sprays of bloom from branches spring,
And when the little bird 'mid flowers
Doth song of sweetness loudly sing:
To her with longing love I cling,
Of all the world the fairest thing,

Whose thrall I am, who bliss can bring
And give to me life's crown.
A gracious fate to me is sent;
Methinks it is by Heaven lent
From women all, my heart is bent,
To light on Alysoun.

Her sheeny locks are fair to see,
Her lashes brown, her eyes of black;
With lovely mouth she smiles on me;
Her waist is slim, of lissom make.
Unless as mate she will me take,
To be her own, my heart will break;
Longer to live I will forsake,
And dead I will fall down.
A gracious fate, etc.

All for thy sake I restless turn,
And wakeful hours sigh through at night;
For thee, sweet lady, do I yearn;
My cheeks wax wan in woful plight.
No man so wise that can aright
Her goodness tell, her beauties bright;
Her throat is than the swan's more white,
The fairest maid in town.
A gracious fate, etc.

Weary as water in the weir,
With wooing I am spent and worn;
Lest any reave me, much I fear,
And leave me mateless and forlorn.
A sharp, short pain is better borne,
Than now and evermore to mourn.
My love, O fair one, do not scorn,
No longer on me frown.
A gracious fate to me is sent;

Methinks it is by Heaven lent;
From women all, my heart is bent,
To light on Alysoun.

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

(About 1300)

I know a maid in bower bright,
That full seemly is to sight
Maid of majesty and might,
Of loyal heart and hand.
'Midst many a nobler one
A maid of blood and bone,
I know not ever none
So fair in all the land.
Blow, Northern Wind,
Send thou me my sweeting
Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

With her long and lovely tresses,
Forehead and face fair for caresses
Blest be the joy my lady blesses
That bird so bright in bour,
With lovesome eyes so large and good
With blissful brows beneath her hood,
He that once hung upon the Rood
Her life holds in honóur.
Blow, Northern Wind,
Send thou me my sweeting
Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow

Her face is full of light,
As a lantern in the night
She sheds a radiance bright,

So fair is she and fine.
Her neck is slender to enfold
Her loving arms bring joy untold
Her little hands are soft to hold
Would God that she were mine.
    Blow, Northern Wind,
    Send thou me my sweeting
    Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

She is coral of goodnéssė
Ruby she of rightfulnéssė
She is christal of cleannéssė
Beauty's banner she.
She is lily of largessė
Periwinkle of promessė
She the sunflower of sweetnessė
Lady of loyalty.
    Blow, Northern Wind,
    Send thou me my sweeting
    Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow.

For her love I mourn and moan,
For her love I grieve and groan,
For her love my good is gone
And I wax all wan.
For her love in sleep I sigh
For her love I wakeful lie
For her love I droop and cry
More than any man.
    Blow, Northern Wind,
    Send thou me my sweeting
    Blow, Northern Wind, blow, blow, blow

WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

When the nightingálė sings, the woodės waxen greenė,
Leaf and grass and blossom springs, in Averil I weenė,
And love is to my heartė gone, with a spear so keenė.
Night and day my blood it drinks, mine heartės death to teenė. [*trouble*]

I have lovėd all this year, that I can love no morė,
I have sighėd many sighs, Lady, for thine orė, [*grace*]
Ne'er my love comes near to thee, and that me grieveth sorė.
Sweetest Lady think on me, I lovėd thee of yorė.

Sweetest Lady, speak I pray, one word of love to me,
While in this wide world I stay, I'll seek for none but thee,
Your kind love might give me bliss, from pain might set me free,
A sweet kiss of thy dear mouth, might my surgeon be.

Sweetest Lady, here I pray, one boon of love bestowė,
If you love me, as men say, as I, dearest, knowė,
If you will it, look on me, just a look will showė,
So much have I thought of thee, I all ghastly growė

Between Lincóln and Lindėsey, North-Hamptoun and Londóunė,
I wot not of so fair a may, by tower, dale, or tounė, [*maid*]
Dearest one, I humbly pray, love me a little soonė.

I now will plain my song,
To her to whom it doth belong.

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

(About 1350)

Where are they that lived before,
Hounds they led and hawks they bore
  And had both field and chase?
Ladies rich in bowers fair,
Nets of gold bind up the hair,
Rosy-bright of face.

They ate and drank and made them glad
Their life was all with pleasure led,
  Men kneelêd them beforn,
They bore themselves full proud and high
And in the twinkling of an eye
Their souls were all forlorn.

Where is that laughing and that song
The pride with which they passed along,
  The hawk, and hound, and bower?
All that joy is gone away,
That weal is come to welaway,
To many a bitter hour.

They took their heaven while they were here
And now in hell they lie in fere; [*together*]
  The fire it burneth ever,
Long is ay, and long is o,
Long is wy, and long is wo,
From thence come they never.

EARTH

That this singular and impressive little poem may be more readily understood, the word *earth* has been here printed with a capital wherever it is used to signify man, the creature made of the dust of the earth. This emphasizes the distinction between the different senses in which the word *earth* is used throughout the poem.

Earth out of earth is wondrously wrought,
Earth of earth hath got a dignity of naught,
Earth upon earth hath set all his thought,
How that Earth upon earth may be high brought.

Earth upon earth would be a King;
But how Earth shall to earth thinketh nothíng;
When that earth biddeth Earth his rentès home bring,
Then shall Earth out of earth have a piteous partíng.

Earth upon earth winneth castles and towers,
Then saith Earth to earth: "Now all this is ours!"
When that Earth upon earth hath built up his bowers,
Then shall Earth upon earth suffer sharp showrès. [*battles*]

Earth goes upon earth as mold upon mold,
So goes Earth upon earth all glittering in gold,
As though Earth unto earth never go should,
And yet Earth shall to earth before that he would.

O thou Earth that on earth travailest night and day,
To deck thee, Earth, to paint thee with wanton array;
Yet shalt thou, Earth, for all thy earth, make thou it never so quaint and gay,
Out of this earth into the earth, there to cling as a clod of clay.

O wretched man, why art thou proud that art of earth makèd?
Hither broughtest thou no shroud, but poor came thou and naked!
When thy soul is gone out, and thy body in earth rakèd,
Then thy body that was rank and undevout, of all men is hated.

Out of this earth came to this earth this wretched garmént,
To hide this Earth, to hap this Earth, to him was clothing lent;
Now goes Earth upon earth, rueful, ragged, and rent,
Therefore shall Earth under earth have hideous torménd.

Why that Earth too must love earth, wonder me think,
Or why that Earth for sûperflue earth, too sore sweat will or swink; [*toil*]
For when that Earth upon earth is brought within the brink,
Then shall Earth of the earth have a rueful swink.

So, Earth upon earth, consider thou may
How Earth cometh into earth naked alway,
Why should Earth upon earth go now so stout or gay
When Earth shall pass out of earth in so poor array?

Therefore, thou Earth upon earth that so wickedly hast wrought,
While that thou, Earth, art upon earth, turn again thy thought,
And pray to that God upon earth that all the earth hath wrought,
That thou, Earth upon earth, to bliss may be brought.

O Thou Lord that madest this earth for this Earth, and suffered here painès ill,
Let not this Earth for this earth evil e'er spille, [*destroy*]

But that this Earth on this earth be ever working Thy will,
So that this Earth from this earth may fly up to Thy high hill.

Amen.

LIFE

The life of this world
Is rulèd with wind,
Weeping, darknéss,
And stirring: [*unres!*]
With wind we blowen, [*blossom*]
With wind we lassen:
With weeping we comen,
With weeping we passen.
With stirring we beginnen
With stirring we enden,
With dread we dwellen,
With dread we enden.

AVE MARIA

Ave maris stella
The star upon the sea
Dei mater alma
Blessed mayest thou be
Atque semper virgo
Pray thy son for me
Felix celi porta
That I may come to thee.

. . . . . .

LULLABY

I saw a fair maiden a-sitting to sing
She lullèd a little child, a sweetè lordíng
Lullaby my litling, my dear son, my sweeting,
Lullaby my dear heart, my own dear darlíng.

That child is the Lord who hath made everything,
Of all lords he is Lord, of all kings he is King.
Lullaby, etc.

There was mickle melody in that child's birth
All dwellers in heaven's bliss, they made mickle mirth
Lullaby, etc.

Angels brought their song that night and said unto the child
"Blessed be thou and so be she that is both meek and mild."
Lullaby, etc.

Pray we now to that Child and his Mother dear
To grant them his blessing that now make good cheer.
Lullaby my litling, my dear son, my sweeting,
Lullaby my dear heart my own dear darlíng.

LULLABY

Lullay, lullay, little child!
Why weepest thou so sore?
Needès must thou weep,
Thou wert doomed of yore
Ever to live in sorrow,
Ever to sigh and strive,
As thy fathers did ere this

Whilst they were alive.
Lullay, lullay, little child!
Child lullay, lullow!
To this world unknown
Sadly come art thou.

Beasts and birds and cattle,
The fishes in the flood,
And each thing that liveth
Made of bone and blood,
When into the world they come
They do themselves some good,
All but that poor imp
That is of Adam's blood.
With care art thou beset;
Thou knowest naught of this world's wild
That is before thee set.

Child, if it betideth
That Time shall prosper thee,
Think how thou wert fostered
On thy mother's knee;
Ever mind thee in thine heart
Of those thingès three,—
Whence thou camest, where thou art,
And what shall come of thee.
Lullay, lullay, little child!
Child lullai, lullay!
With sorrow thou camest to this world,
With sorrow shalt wend away.

O! trust not to this world,
It is thy fell foe.
The rich it maketh poor,
The poor man sick alsó.
It turneth woe to weal,

And also weal to woe.
Trust not man this changing world
While it turneth so.
Lullay, lullay, little child!
The foot is on the wheel,
How 'twill turn thou knowest not,
Whether to woe or weal.

Child, thou art a pilgrim
In wickedness yborn;
Thou wanderest in this false world,
Look thou well beforn.
Death shall come with sudden blast
Out of the darkness hoar,
Adam's children down to cast,
Adam he slew before.
Lullay, lullay, little child!
Adam did woes oppress
In the land of Paradise
Through Satan's wickedness

Child, thou'rt not a pilgrim,
But a helpless guest.
Thy day already told,
Thy lot already cast.
Whether thou shalt wend
North, or East, or West,
Death shall thee betide,
With bitter bale in breast.
Lullay, lullay, little child!
Child lullay, lullow!
To this unknown world
Sadly come art thou.

PART THIRD

FROM CHAUCER TO WYATT AND SURREY

I. CHAUCER AND GOWER

Geoffrey Chaucer

(1340?-1400)

THE DETHE OF BLAUNCHE THE DUCHESSE

(1369)

THE DREAM

(*Lines 291-947*)

Me thoghtė thus,—that hit was May,
And in the dawenyng I lay,
(Me mette thus,) in my bed al naked, [*I dreamed*]
And lokėd forth, for I was wakėd
With smalė foulės a gret hepe, [*little birds*]
That had affrayed me out of my slepe
Through noise and swetnesse of her song. [*their*]
And as me mette they sate a-mong
Upon my chambre roof wyth-oute
Upon the tyles over al a-boute,
And songen, everich in his wyse,
The mostė solempnė servyse
By note, that ever man, I trowe,
Hadde herd; for som of hem songe lowe [*them*]
Som hye, and al of oon acorde.
To tellė shortly, at oo worde, [*one*]

Was never herd so swete a steven,— [*voice*]
But hit hadde be a thyng of heven,—
So mery a soun, so swete entunes, [*intonings*]
That certes, for the toune of Tewnes, [*Tunis*]
I nolde but I hadde herd hem synge,
For al my chambre gan to rynge
Through syngyng of hir armonye.
For instrument nor melodye
Was nowher herd yet half so swete,
Nor of accordė half so mete;
For ther was noon of hem that feynėd
To synge, for ech of hem him peynėd
To fynde out mery crafty notes; [*skilful*]
They ne sparėd not hir throtes.

And sooth to seyn my chambre was
Ful wel depeynted, and with glas
Were al the wyndowes wel y-glasėd
Ful clere, and nat an hole y-crasėd, [*broken*]
That to beholde hit was gret joye;
For hoolly al the storie of Troye
Was in the glasyng y-wrought thus,
Of Ector, and of kyng Priamus;
Of Achilles, and of Lamedon,
And eke of Medea and of Jasoun;
Of Paris, Eleyne, and of Lavyne;
And alle the walles with colours fyne
Were peynted, bothė text and glose,
And al the Romaunce of the Rose.
My wyndowes weren shet echon
And through the glas the sunnė shon
Upon my bed with bryghtė bemės,
With many gladė, gilden stremės;
And eek the welken was so fair,— [*sky*]
Blew, bryght, clerė was the air,
And ful attempre forsothe hit was; [*mild*]

For nother to cold nor hoot hit nas,
Ne in al the welkene was a clowde. (*343*)

. . . . . .

'Hit happed that I cam on a day (*804*)
In-to a place there that I say [*saw*]
Trewly the fayrest companye
Of ladyes, that ever man with ÿe [*eye*]
Had seen to-gedres in oo place.
Shal I clepe hyt hap, other grace [*call it chance or grace*]
That broghte me ther? Nay, but Fortúne
That is to lyen ful commune. [*that commonly deceives*]

. . . . . .

'Among these ladies thus echoon, [*816*]
Soth to seyèn, I sawgh oon
That was lyk noon of the route,
For I dar swere, withoutè doute,
That as the someres sonnè bryght
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght
Than any other planéte in heven,
The monè, or the sterrès seven;
For all the worldè so had she
Surmounted hem alle of beauté. [*surpassed*]

. . . . . .

'I saw hir daunce so comlily, [*847*]
Carole and synge so swetèly,
Laughe and pleye so womanly,
And lokè so debónairly,
So goodly speke, and so friendlÿ;
That certes, I trowe that ever-more
Nas seyn so blisful a tresore,
For every heer on hir hede, [*hair*]
Soth to seyn, it was not rede,
Ne nouther yelw, ne broun it nas, [*yellow*]
Me thoghtè most lyk gold it was.
'And whiche ÿen my lady hadde! [*what eyes*]

Debonair, goodė, glade, and sadde, [*constant, steady*]
Symple, of goode mochel, noght to wyde, [*guileless; of good size*]
Ther-to hir look nas not a-syde, [*across*]
Ne overthwert, but beset so wel,
Hit drew and took up everydel
Alle that on hir gan be-holde.
Hir ÿen semed anoon she wolde
Have mercy,—foolės wenden so,— [*would have thought so*]
But hit was never the rather do.
Hit was no countrefeted thyng,
Hit was hir ownė pure lokyng,
That the goddessė, dame Natúre,
Had made hem opene by mesure, [*not too wide*]
And close; for were she never so glad
Hir lokyng was not foly sprad, [*foolishly scattered*]
Ne wildėly, thogh that she pleyde;
But ever me thoghte hir ÿen seyde,
"By God, my wrathe is al for-yive!"
'Therwith hir liste so wel to live,
That dulnesse was of hir a-drad.
She nas to sobre, ne to glad.
In allė thyngės more mesure [*moderation*]
Had never, I trowė, creatúre. (*881*)

. . . . . .

'Hir throte, as I have now memoire, (*944*)
Semėd a round tour of yvoire,
Of good gretnesse, and noght to grete.
And godė, fairė, White, she hete.' [*i.e., Blanche was called*]

From "THE PARLEMENT OF FOULES"

(About 1382)

. . . But first were chosen foulès for to synge,
As, yeer be yere, was alwey hir usánce
To synge a roundel at hir departynge,
To don to Nature honour and plesaunce.
The note, I trowe, y-makèd was in Fraunce; [*air, tune*]
The wordès were swiche as ye may here fynde
The nextè vers, as I now have in mynde.

'Now welcom, somer, with thy sonnè softe,
That hast this wintrès weders overshake
And driven a-wey the longè nyghtès blake;

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on lofte,
Thus syngen smalè foulès for thy sake
Now welcom, somer, with thy sonnè softe,
That hast this wintrès weders overshake.

Wele han they causè for to gladèn ofte,
Sith ech of hem recoverèd hath his make; [*mate*]
Ful blisful mowe they ben when they awake.
Now welcom, somer, with thy sonnè softe,
That hast this wintrès weders overshake
And driven a-wey the longè nightès blake.'

From THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

(About 1385)

THE PROLOGUE

A thousande tymės I have herd men telle,
That there is joy in hevene, and peyne in helle,
And I acordė wel that it is so;
But, nathėles, yet wot I wel also,
That ther is noon dwellyng in this countree,
That eythir hath in hevene or in helle y-be,
Ne may of hit noon other weyės witen,
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde it writen;
For by assay ther may no man it preve.
But God forbedė but men shuldė leve [*believe*]
Wel morė thing than men han seen with eye!
Men shal not wenen everything a lye
But-if hymselfe it seeth, or ellės dooth; [*except, unless*]
For, God wot, thing is never the lassė sooth,
Thogh every wight ne may it not y-see.
Bernarde, the monke, ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than motė we to bokės that we fynde,—
Thurgh which that oldė thingės ben in mynde,—
And to the doctrine of these oldė wyse,
Yevė credénce, in every skylful wise,
That tellen of these olde apprevėd stories,
Of holynesse, of regnės, of victóries,
Of love, of hate, of other sondry thynges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersýnges.
And if that oldė bokės were awey,
Y-lornė were of rémembraunce the key. [*lost*]
Wel ought us, thanne, honóuren and beleve
These bokės, ther we han noon other preve.

And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,
On bokės for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem yive I feyth and ful credénce,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
So hertėly, that ther is gamė noon [*amusement*]
That from my bokės maketh me to goon,
But it be seldom on the holyday,
Save, certeynly, whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I here the foulės synge, [*birds*]
And that the flourės gynnen for to sprynge,—
Farewel my boke, and my devocion!
Now have I thanne suche a condicion,
Thát of alle the flourės in the mede,
Than love I most thise flourės white and rede,
Suche as men callen daysyes in our toun.
To hem have I so grete affeccioun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day,
That I nam up and walkyng in the mede,
To seen this floure agein the sonnė sprede,
Whan it uprysith erly by the morwe;
That blisful sightė softneth al my sorwe,
So glad am I, whan that I have presénce
Of it, to doon it allė reverence,
As she that is of allė flourės flour,
Fulfillėd of al vertue and honour,
And evere ilikė faire, and fresshe of hewe. [*alike*]
And I love it, and evere ylikė newe, [*alike*]
And ever shal, til that myn hertė dye;
Al swere I nat, of this I wol nat lye;
Ther lovėd no wight hotter in his lyve.
And whan that it is eve, I rennė blyve, [*quickly*]
As sone as evere the sonnė gynneth weste,
To seen this flour, how it wol go to reste,
For fere of nyght, so hateth she derknesse!
Hir chere is pleynly sprad in the brightnesse [*face*]

Of the sonnè, for ther it wol unclose.
Allas, that I ne had Englyssh, ryme or prose,
Súffisant this flour to preyse aright!
But helpeth ye that han konnyng and myght, [*skill*]
Ye lovers, that kan make of sentèment; [*write, compose*]
In this case oghtè ye be diligent
To forthren me somewhat in my labóur,
Whethir ye ben with the Leef or with the Flour;
For wel I wot, that ye han her-biforne [*heard before*]
Of makynge ropen, and lad awey the corne; [*poetry reaped*]
And I come after, glenyng here and there,
And am ful glad if I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han left.
And thogh it happen me rehercen eft [*after*]
That ye han in your fresshè songès sayede,
Forbereth me, and beth not evele apayede, [*ill pleased*]
Syn that ye see I do it in the honóur
Of love, and eke in service of the flour
Whom that I serve as I have witte or myght.
She is the clerenesse and the verray lyght,
That in this derkè worlde me wynt and ledyth, [*turns*]
The herte in-with my sorwful brest yow dredith, [*reverences*]
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verrayly
The maistresse of my witte, and nothing I.
My worde, my werk, is knyt so in youre bond
That as an harpe obeieth to the hond,
That maketh it soune after his fyngerynge,
Ryght so mowe ye oute of myn hertè bringe
Swich vois, ryght as yow lyst, to laughe or pleyne;
Be ye my gide, and lady sovereyne.
As to my erthely god, to yowe I calle,
Bothe in this werke, and in my sorwès alle.
But wherfore that I spake to yive credénce
To oldè stories, and doon hem reverence,
And that men mosten morè thyng beleve
Then they may seen at eye or ellès preve,

That shal I seyn, whanne that I see my tyme—
I may nat al attonês speke in ryme. [*at once*]
My besy gost, that thursteth alwey newe, [*anxious*]
To seen this flour so yong, so fresshe of hewe,
Constreynèd me with so gledy desire, [*glowing*]
That in myn herte I feelè yet the fire,
That madè me to ryse er it wer day,
And this was now the firstè morwe of May,
With dredful hert, and glad devocion [*reverent, full of awe*]
For to ben at the resurreccion
Of this flour, whan that it shulde unclose
Agayne the sonne, that roos as rede as rose,
That in the brest was of the beste, that day, [*beast, i.e. Taurus*]
That Agenorês doghtre ladde away.
And doun on knes anon-ryght I me sette,
And as I koude, this fresshè flour I grette,
Knelyng alwey, til it unclosèd was,
Upon the smalè, softè, swotè gras, [*sweet*]
That was with flourès swote enbrouded al, [*broidered*]
Of swich swetnesse, and swich odóur over-al,
That for to speke of gomme, or herbe, or tree, [*gum*]
Comparisoun may noon y-makèd be;
For it surmounteth pleynly alle odoures,
And of richè beautè allè floures.
Forgeten had the erthe his pore estate
Of wyntir, that him naked made and mate, [*weak*]
And with his swerd of colde so sorè greved;
Now hath the atemprèsonne al that releved [*mild*]
That naked was, and clad it new agayne.
The smalè foulès, of the sesoun fayne, [*glad*]
That of the panter and the nette ben scaped, [*bag-net*]
Upon the foweler, that hem made a-whaped [*frightened*]
In wynter, and distroyèd hadde hire broode,
In his dispite hem thoghte it did hem goode
To synge of hym, and in hir songe dispise
The foulè cherle, that, for his coveytise,

Had hem betrayèd with his sophistrye.
This was hir songe, 'The foweler we deffye,
And al his crafte.' And sommè songen clere
Layès of love, that joye it was to here,
In worshipynge and in preysing of hir make; [*mate*]
And, for the newè blisful somers sake,
Upon the braunchès ful of blosmès softe,
In hire delyt, they turnèd hem ful ofte,
And songen, 'Blessèd be Seynt Valentyne!
For on his day I chees you to be myne,
Withouten répentyng myne hertè swete!'
And therewithal hire bekès gonnen meete.

. . . . . .

And tho that haddè don unkyndènesse,— [*those*]
As doth the tydif, for newfangelnesse,— [*titmouse*]
Besoghtè mercy of hir trespassynge,
And humblèly songen hir répentynge,
And sworen on the blosmès to be trewe,
So that hire makès wolde upon hem rewe, [*take pity on them*]
And at the lastè maden hir acorde.
Al founde they Daunger for a tyme a lord, [*Love's mastery*]
Yet Pitee, thurgh his strongè gentil myght,
Foryaf, and madè Mercy passen Ryght,
Thurgh Innocence, and rulèd Curtèsye.
But I ne clepe it innocence folye,
Ne fals pitee, for vertue is the mene; [*mean, average*]
As Ethike seith, in swich maner I mene.
And thus thise fowelès, voide of al malíce,
Acordèden to love, and laften vice
Of hate, and songen alle of oon acorde,
'Welcome, Somer, oure governour and lorde.'
And Zepherus and Flora gentilly
Yaf to the flourès, softe and tenderly,
His swootè breth, and made hem for to sprede, [*sweet*]
As god and goddesse of the floury mede.
In whiche me thoght I myghtè, day by day,
Dwellen alwey, the joly month of May,

Withouten slepe, withouten mete or drynke.
Adoun ful softėly I gan to synke,
And lenynge on myn elbowe and my syde,
The longė day, I shoop me for to abide, [*planned*]
For nothing ellis, and I shal nat lye,
But for to loke upon the dayėsie,
That men by resoun wel it callė may
The dayėsie, or elles the ÿe of day,
The empėrice, and floure of floures alle.
I pray to God that fairė mote she falle, [*good may befall*]
And alle that loven flourės, for hire sake!
But, nathėles, ne wene nat that I make [*make poetry*]
In preysing of the Flour agayn the Leef,
No more than of the corne agayn the sheef;
For as to me nys lever noon, ne lother,
I nam witholden yit with never nother. [*retained by*]
Ne I not who serveth Leef, ne who the Flour. [*not i.e. ne wot*]
Wel browken they hir service or labour! [*may they enjoy*]
For this thing is al of another tonne, [*cask-weight*]
Of oldė storye, er swiche thinge was begonne.

Whan that the sonne out of the southe gan weste,
And that this flour gan close, and goon to reste,
For derknesse of the nyght, the which she dredde,
Home to myn house full swiftly I me spedde
To goon to reste, and erly for to ryse,
To seen this flour to-sprede, as I devyse.
And in a litel herber that I have, [*arbor*]
That benchėd was on turvės fressh y-grave,
I bad men sholdė me my couchė make;
For deyntee of the newė someres sake, [*for the sake of enjoying*]
I had hem strawen flourės on my bed.

Whan I was leyde, and hadde myn eyen hed, [*hid*]
I fel on slepe, in-with an houre or two.
Me mette how I lay in the medewė tho, [*I dreamed*]
To seen this flour that I love so and drede; [*revere*]
And from a-fer come walkyng in the mede

The god of Love, and in his hand a quene,
And she was clad in reäl habite grene; [*royal*]
A fret of gold she haddė next her heer. [*ornament*]
And upon that a whitė crowne she beer,
With flourouns smalė, and I shal nat lye, [*florets*
For al the worlde ryght as a daÿesye
Y-córouned is with whitė levės lyte,
So were the flourouns of hire córoune white;
For of o perlė, fyne, órientál, [*one*]
Hire whitė córoune was i-maked al,
For which the whitė coroune above the grene
Máde hire lyke a daysie for to sene,
Considered eke hir fret of golde above.
Y-clothėd was this mighty god of Love
In silke enbrouded, ful of grenė greves, [*groves*]
In-with a fret of redė rosė leves,
The fresshest syn the worlde was first bygonne.
His giltė here was corowned with a sonne
In stede of golde, for hevynesse and wyghte;
Therwith me thoght his facė shon so brighte
That wel unnethės myght I him beholde; [*uneasily, scarcely*]
And in his hande me thoght I saugh him holde
Two firy dartės as the gledės rede, [*gleeds, brands*]
And aungelyke his wyngės saugh I sprede.
And, al be that men seyn that blynd is he,
Algate me thoghtė that he myghtė se; [*all the same*]
For sternėly on me he gan byholde,
So that his loking doth myn hertė colde.
And by the hande he helde this noble quene,
Crownėd with white, and clothėd al in grene,
So womanly, so bénigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men woldė seke,
Hálf hire beutė shuldė men nat fynde
In creäture that formėd is by Kynde. [*Nature*]
And therfore may I seyn, as thynketh me, [*say*]
This song in preysyng of this lady fre.

Hyde Absalon, thy giltė tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy mekenesse al adoun;
Hyde, Jonathas, al thy frendly manére;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Make of youre wifhode no comparysoun;
Hyde ye youre beautės, Ysoude and Eleyne;
My lady comith, that al this may disteyne. [*stain, dim*]

Thy fairė body lat it nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou Lucresse of Romė toun
And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with all thy passÿoun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love, and your renoun,
And thou, Tesbė, that hast of love suche peyne;
My lady comith, that al this may disteyne.

Hero, Dido, Laudómia, alle yfere, [*altogether*]
And Phillis, hangyng for thy Demophon,
And Canacė, espiėd by thy cherė,
Ysiphilė, betraysėd with Jason,
Maketh of your trouthė neythir boost ne soun,
Nor Ypermystre, or Adriane, ye tweyne;
My lady cometh, that al thys may dysteyne.

This balade may ful wel y-songen be,
As I have seyde erst, by my lady free;
For certeynly al thise mowe nat suffice
To apperen wyth my lady in no wyse.
For as the sonnė wole the fire disteyne,
So passeth al my lady sovereyne,
That is so good, so faire, so debonayre,

I prey to God that ever falle hire faire.
For naddė comfort ben of hire presénce, [*ne hadde, i.e. had not*]
I hadde ben dede, withouten any defence,

For drede of Lovès wordès, and his chere,
As, when tyme is, herafter ye shal here.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

(Begun 1386-1387)

THE PROLOGUE

Whan that Aprílle with hise shourès soote [*sweet*]
The droghte of March hath percèd to the roote,
And bathèd every veyne in swich licóur [*moisture*]
Of which vertú engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swetè breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth [*wood*]
The tendrè croppès, and the yongè sonne [*sprouts*]
Hath in the Ram his halfè cours y-ronne,
And smalè fowelès maken melodÿe,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
(So priketh hem Natúre in hir coráges,) [*hearts*]
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straungè strondès,
To fernè halwès, kowthe in sondry londes; [*distant saints*]
And specially, from every shirès ende *known*,]
Of Engèlond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blissful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke. [*sick*]

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage, [*heart*]
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,

Of sondry folk, by áventure y-falle [*by chance*]
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esèd attè beste. [*entertained*]
And shortly, whan the sonnè was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And madè forward erly for to ryse, [*agreement*]
To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But nathèless, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this talè pacè,
Me thynketh it accordaunt to resóun
To tellè yow al the condicïoun
Of ech of hem, so as it semèd me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a Knyght than wol I first begynne.

A KNYGHT ther was and that a worthy man,
That fro the tymè that he first bigan
To riden out, he lovèd chivalrie,
Trouthe and honóur, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordès werre,
And thereto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendòm as in hethènesse,
And ever honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne;
Ful oftè tyme he hadde the bord bigonne [*table*]
Aboven allè nacïons in Pruce.
In Lettów hadde he reysèd and in Ruce,— [*traveled*]
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarÿe.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalÿe,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Gretè See

At many a noble aryve hadde he be. [*sea-expedition*]
At mortal battailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feithe at Tramyssene
In lystès thriès, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilkè worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtymè with the lord of Palatÿe
Again another hethen in Turkÿe;
And evermoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileynye ne sayde,
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit, gentil knyght.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors weren goode, but he ne was nat gay;
Of fustian he werèd a gypón [*doublet*]
Al bismotered with his habergeon [*hauberk, coat of mail*]
For he was late y-come from his viáge,
And wentè for to doon his pilgrymage.
With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIÉR,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkès crulle as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse,
Of his statúre he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere and greet of strengthe; [*quick*]
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie, [*campaign*]
In Flaundrès, in Artoys and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede [*embroidered*]
Al ful of fresshè flourès whyte and reede;
Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with slevès longe and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and fairè ryde;
He koudè songès make and wel endite,

Juste and eek daunce and weel purtreye and write. [*draw or paint*]
So hoote he lovedè that by nyghtertale [*night-time*]
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely and servysáble,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

A YEMAN hadde he and servántz namo [*no more*]
At that tyme, for hym listè ridè soo;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
A sheef of pocock arwès, bright and kene, [*peacock*]
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily—
Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly;
His arwès droupèd noght with fetherès lowe—
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun viság̃e. [*crop-head*]
Of woodecraft wel koude he al the uságe. [*knew*]
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracér, [*arm-guard*]
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler.
And on that oother syde a gay daggére,
Harneisèd wel and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophere on his brest of silver sheene; [*shone*]
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene. [*shoulder-belt*]
A forster was he, soothly as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire grettest ooth was but by seintè Loy,
And she was clepèd madame Eglentyne. [*called*]
Ful weel she soong the servicè dyvyne,
Entunèd in hir nose ful semèly,
And Frenssh she spake ful faire and fetisly [*neatly*]
After the scole of Stratford-attè-Bowe,
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At metè wel y-taught was she with-alle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippès falle,
Ne wette hir fyngrès in hir saucè depe.
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,

Thát no drope ne fille upon hire breste; [*fell*]
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste. [*joy*]
Hire over-lippė wypėd she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grecė, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semėly after hir mete she raughte. [*reached*]
And sikerly she was of greet desport. [*surely*]
And ful plesáunt and amyable of port.
And peyned hire to countrefetė cheere [*looks*]
Of Court, and been estatlich of manére, [*dignified*]
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscïence, [*sympathy*]
She was so charitable and so pitóus
She woldė wepe if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smalė houndės hadde she that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel breed; [*fine white bread*]
But soorė wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerdė smerte; [*stick smartly*]
And al was conscïence and tendrė herte.
Ful semyly hir wympul pynchėd was; [*breast-cover*]
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas, [*shapely*]
Hir mouth ful smal and there-to softe and reed,
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spannė brood I trowe,
For, hardily, she was not undergrowe. [*surely*]
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war; [*neat*]
Of smal corál aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedės, gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crownėd A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another Nonnė with hire haddė she
That was hir Chapėleyne, and Preestės thre.
A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
An outridere, that lovėde venerie; [*hunting*]

A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere
Gýnglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere,
And eeke as loude as dooth the chapel belle.
Ther as this lord was keepere of the celle,
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Benéit,
By-cause that it was olde and som-del streit,— [*strict*]
This ilkė Monk leet oldė thyngės pace,
And heeld after the newė world a space.
He yaf nat of that text a pullėd hen [*plucked hen*]
That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
Ne that a Monk whan he is reechėlees [*without direction*]
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees: [*to*]
This is to seyn, a Monk out of his cloystre.
But thilkė text heeld he nat worth an oystre; [*that same*]
And I seyde his opinïoun was good.
What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood, [*mad*]
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handės and labóure, [*toil*]
As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served? [*bids*]
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prikasour aright; [*hard rider*]
Grehoundes he hadde; as swift as fowel in flight:
Of prikyng and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves y-purfiled at the hond [*trimmed*]
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond; [*gray fur*]
And for to festne his hood under his chyn
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pyn,
A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face as he hadde been enoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;
Hise eyėn stepe and rollynge in his heed, [*protruding*]
That stemėd as a forneys of a leed; [*glowed like furnace*

His bootės souple, his hors in greet estaat. *under caldron*]
Now certeinly he was a fair prelaat.
He was nat pale, as a forpynèd goost: [*tormented*]
A fat swan loved he best of any roost;
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
A lymytour, a ful solempnė man;
In allė the ordrės foure is noon that kan
So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage;
He haddė maad ful many a marïage
Of yongė wommen at his owenė cost:
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famuliér was he
With frankėleyns over al in his contree;
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun,
For he hadde power of confessïoun,
As seyde hym-self, moorė than a curát,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetėly herde he confessïoun,
And pleasaunt was his absolucioun.
He was an esy man to yeve penáunce
Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
For unto a poure ordre for to yive
Is signė that a man is wel y-shryve;
For, if he yaf, he dorstė make avaunt [*boast*]
He wistė that a man was répentaunt:
For many a man so harde is of his herte
He may nat wepe al thogh hym soorė smerte,
Therfore in stede of wepynge and preyéres
Men moote yeve silver to the pourė freres.
His typet was ay farsėd full of knyves [*hood*] [*stuffed*]
And pynnės for to yeven yongė wyves;
And certeinly he hadde a murye note;
Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote: [*small harp*]

Of yeddynges he baar outrèly the pris; [*songs*]
His nekkė whit was as the flour-de-lys,
Ther-to he strong was as a champïoun.
He knew the tavernes well in al the toun
And everich hostiler and tappestere [*barmaid*]
Bet than a lazar or a beggèstere; [*leper*] [*beggar*]
For unto swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with sikė lazars áqueyntáunce;
It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
Fór to deelen with no swiche poraille; [*poor folks*]
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was and lowely of servyse,
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous!
He was the bestė beggere in his hous,
For thogh a wydwe haddė noght a sho, [*shoe*]
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente:
His purchase was wel bettre than his rente. [*profit,*]
And rage he koude, as it were right a whelpe.
In lovė-dayes ther koude he muchel helpe.
For ther he was not lyk a cloysterer
With a thredbare cope, as is a poure scolér,
But he was lyk a maister, or a pope;
Of double worstede was his semycope, [*short cloak*]
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsėd for his wantownesse,
To make his Englissh sweet upon his tonge,
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
His eyėn twynkled in his heed aryght
As doon the sterrės in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forkėd berd,
In mottėleye, and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a Flaunderyssh bevere hat;

His bootés claspèd faire and fetisly;
His resons he spake ful solempnèly,
Sowynge alway thencreés of his wynnýng.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing [*at any cost*]
Bitwixè Middelburgh and Orèwelle.
Wel koude he in eschaungè sheeldès selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
Ther wistè no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce
With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce, [*loans*]
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn I noot how men hym calle. [*know not*]

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also
That unto logyk haddè long y-go.
As leenè was his hors as is a rake.
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
But lookèd holwe, and ther-to sobrely;
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy; [*short over-coat*]
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have offíce;
For hym was levere have at his beddès heed
Twénty bookés clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robès riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie: [*fiddle*] [*harp*]
But al be that he was a philosóphre, [*albeit, although*]
Yet haddè he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendès hente [*get*]
On bookés and his lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soulès preye
Of hem that yaf hym wher-with to scoleye. [*to study*]
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heed, [*care*]
Noght o word spak he moorè than was neede, [*one*]
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quyk and ful of hy senténce. [*meaning*]

Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche, [*tending to*]
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawė, war and wys, [*wary, prudent*]
That often haddė been at the Parvys, [*Church-porch,*]
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence;
He semėd swich, hise wordės weren so wise.
Justice he was full often in Assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissïoun. [*full*]
For his science and for his heigh renoun,
Of fees and robės hadde he many oon;
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon. [*prosecutor*]
Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
His purchasyng myghtė nāt been infect. [*invalidated,*]
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semėd bisiėr than he was.
In termės hadde he caas and doomės alle [*cases and judg-*
That from the tyme of kyng William were falle; *ments*]
Ther-to he coude endite and make a thyng.
Ther koudė no wight pynchen at his writýng; [*find fault*]
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote,
Girt with a ceint of silk with barrės smale; [*girdle*]
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A Frankeleyn was in his compaignye.
Whit was his berd as is a daysėye,
Of his complexioun he was sangwýn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn;
To lyven in delit was evere his wone, [*custom*]
For he was Epicurus owenė sone,
That heeld opinïoun that pleyn delit [*full*]
Was verraily felicitee parfit.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he:
Seint Julian was he in his contree;

His breed, his ale, was alweys after oon;
A better envynèd man was nowher noon. [*stored with wine*]
Withoutè bakè mete was never his hous,
Of fissh and flessh, and that so plenteuous
It snewèd in his hous of mete and drynke.
Of allè deyntees that men koudè thynke
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaungèd he his mete and his sopér.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe [*coop*]
And many a breem and may a luce in stuwe. [*fish-pound*]
Wo was his cook but if his saucè were
Poynaunt and sharpe and redy al his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway, [*fixed table*]
Stood redy covered al the longè day.
At sessïouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful oftè tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas, and a gipser al of silk, [*dagger*] [*pouch*]
Heeng at his girdel, whit as mornè milk;
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour. [*auditor*]
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour. [*land-holder*]

An Haberdasshere, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapycer,
And they were clothed alle in o lyveree [*one*]
Of a solémpne and greet fraternitee; [*i.e., a guild*]
Ful fressh and newè hir geere apikèd was; [*trimmed, adorned*]
Hir knyvès werè chapèd noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel. [*every bit, wholly*]
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle, on a deys. [*guildhall: dais*]
Everich for the wisdom that he kan [*each: he knew*]
Was shaply for to been an alderman. [*fit to be*]
For catel haddè they ynogh and rente, [*goods; and income*]
And eek hir wyvès wolde it wel assente;
And ellès certeyn werè they to blame.

It is ful fair to been y-cleped MADAME, [*be called*]
And goon to vigiliés al bifore, [*in front of all*]
And have a mantel roialliche y-bore.

A COOK they haddé with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknés with the marybones,
And poudré-marchant tart and galyngale; [*i.e., a sharp and*
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale, *a sweet spice*]
He koudé rooste and sethe and boille and frye,
Máken mortreux and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughté me,
That on his shyne a mormal haddé he. [*an open sore*]
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, wonyng fer by weste; [*dwelling*] (*388*)
For aught I woot he was of Dertémouthe.
He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthe, [*farm-horse*]
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
A daggere hangyng on a laas hadde he [*cord*]
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hoté somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;
And certeinly he was a good feláwe.
Ful many a draughte of wine hadde he y-drawe
Fro Burdeuxward whil that the Chapman sleepe. [*merchant*]
Of nycé conscïence took he no keepe. [*heed*]
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sent hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremés and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe and his moone, his lode-menage, [*pilotage*]
Ther nas noon swich from Hullé to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake:
With many a tempest hadde his berd ben shake;
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the Cape of Fynystere, [*Isle of Gottland*]

And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
His barge y-clepèd was the Maudèlayne.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisik;
In all this world ne was ther noon hym lik
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacïent a ful greet deel [*watched*]
In hourès, by his magyk natureel. [*astrological hours*]
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his ymáges for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye,
And where they engendred and of what humóur;
He was a verray parfit praktisour.
The cause y-knowe and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sikè man his boote. [*remedy*]
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To send him droggès and his letuaries, [*syrup and powder*]
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne,
Hir frendshipe nas nat newè to bigynne.
Wel knew he the oldè Esculapius
And Deÿscorides, and eke Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis and Avycen,
Averrois, Damascien and Constantyn,
Bernard and Gatèsden and Gilbertyn.
Of his diétè mesurable was he.
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissyng and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al, [*red and blue*]
Lynèd with taffata and with sendal.
And yet he was but esy of dispence, [*moderate in spending*]
He keptè that he wan in pestilence.

For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovède gold in special.

A Good Wif was ther of bisidè Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe. [*a pity*]
Of clooth-makyng she haddè swich an haunt [*skill*]
She passèd hem of Yprès and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of allè charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fynè weren of ground,—[*head-dresses*]
I dorstè swere they weyèden ten pound,—
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe;
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirchè dore she haddè fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
But ther-of nedeth nat to speke as nowthe,— [*now*]
And thriès hadde she been at Jerusalém;
She haddè passèd many a straungè strem;
At Rome she haddè been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne,
She koudè muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat-tothèd was she, soothly for to seye. [*with teeih set apart*]
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wymplèd wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or targe;
A foot mantel aboute her hipès large,
And on hire feet a paire of sporès sharpe.
In felaweship wel koude she laughe and carpe; [*chatter*]
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she koude of that art the oldè daunce.

A goodman was ther of religioun,
And was a Pouré Persoun of a Toun;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk;
He was also a lernéd man, a clerk,
That Cristés Gospel trewély wolde preche
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-prevéd oftė sithes. [*proved*] [*times*]
Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doubte,
Unto his pourė parisshens aboute,
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce:
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer asonder,
But he ne laftė nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visíte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf
That firste he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordės caughte, [*those*]
And this figúre he added eek therto,
That if gold rustė what shal iren doo?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewéd man to ruste; [*unlearned*]
And shame it is, if a prest takė keepe,
A shiten shepherde and a clenė sheepe.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
By his clennesse how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
He settė nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
To seken hyn a chaunterie for soules; [*chantry*]
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde, [*supported*]
But dwelte at hoom and keptė wel his folde,

So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie,—
He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was to synful man nat despitous, [*scornful*]
Ne of his speché daungerous ne digne,
But in his techyng déscreet and benygne,
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse;
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys. [*reprove*]
A bettrè preest I trowe that nowher noon ys;
He waited after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spicèd conscience,
But Cristès loore, and his Apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselve.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,—[*cart-load*]
A trewè swynkere and a good was he, [*laborer*]
Lyvynge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best, with al his hoolè herte,
At allè tymès, thogh him gamed or smerte, [*in joy or pain*]
And thanne his neighèbore right as hymselve.
He woldè thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,
For Cristès sake, for every pourè wight,
Withouten hire if it lay in his myght.
His tithès paydè he ful faire and wel, [*early*]
Bothe of his proprè swynk and his catel. [*labor and prop-*
In a tabárd he rood upon a mere. [*sort-coat*]
Ther was also a REVE and a MILLER.
A SOMNOUR and a PARDONER also,
A MAUNCIPLE and myself,—ther were namo.
The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones,
Ful byg was he of brawn and eek of bones;
That provèd wel, for over-al, ther he cam,

At wrastlynge he wolde have awey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikkė knarre, [*knot*]
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre, [*hinge*]
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His berd, as any sowe or fox, was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cope right of his nose he hade [*tip*]
A werte, and thereon stood a toft of herys,
Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
His nosėthirlės blakė were and wyde;
A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as wyde was as a greet forneys,
He was a janglere and a goliardeys, [*loud and ribald*
And that was moost of synne and harlotriės. *jester*]
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thriės, [*charge thrice*]
And yet he hadde a thombe of golde, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood werėd he.
A baggėpipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours myghtė take exemple [*buyers, caterers*]
For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;
For, wheither that he payde or took by taille, [*tally,*
i.e., charged the goods]
Algate he wayted so in his achaat [*always: watched: buying*]
That he was ay biforn and in good staat. [*always before others*]
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
That swich a lewed mannės wit shal pace [*ignorant*]
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?
Of maistrės hadde he mo than thriės ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,

To maken hym lyvė by his prōprė good [*on his own means*]
In honour dettelees, but he were wood, [*without debt: mad*]
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any caas that myghtė falle or happe;
And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe. [*i.e., outwitted them all*]

The Revė was a sclendrė colerik man
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;
His heer was by his erys round y-shorn,
His top was dokėd lyk a preest biforn,
Ful longė were his leggės and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,
Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn,
The yeldynge of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordės sheepe, his neet, his dayėrye, [*cattle*]
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye, [*farm-stock*]
Was hoolly in this revės governyng,
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.
There nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne, [*herdsman: hind: servant*]
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne; [*trickery and deceit*]
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth, [*house*]
With grene trees y-shadwėd was his place.
He koudė bettrė than his lord purchase.
Ful riche he was a-storėd pryvely, [*stocked, provided*]
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly
To yeve and lene hym of his owene good [*give and lend*]
And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.
In youthe he lernėd hadde a good myster, [*craft*]
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.

This Revė sat upon a ful good stot, [*cob*]
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot; [*dappled*]
A long surcote of pers upon he hade, [*blue*]
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldėswelle.
Tukkėd he was as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hyndreste of oure route. [*hindermost*]

A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that placė,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnės face,
For sawcėfleem he was, with eyen narwe. [*pimpled*]
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,
With scalėd browės blake and pilėd berd,— [*scabby*] [*patchy*]
Of his visagė children were aferd. . . .
Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon, [*white lead*]
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of Tartre noon, [*borax: white lead*]
Ne oynėment that woldė clense and byte,
That hym myghte helpen of the whelkės white
Nor of the knobbės sittynge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eke lekes,
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;
Thanne wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood. [*demented*]
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he spekė no word but Latyn.
A fewė termės hadde he, two or thre, [*i.e., legal phrases*]
That he had lernėd out of som decree,—
No wonder is, he herde it al the day,
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
Kan clepen WATTE as wel as kan the pope. [*can call Wat, or Walter*]
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope, [*test, examine*]
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;
Ay *Questio quid juris* wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde; [*fellow, knave*]
A bettre felawe sholdė men noght fynde. . . .

A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,
As greet as it were for an alè stake;
A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake. [*i.e., loaf of bread*]

With hym ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Romè.
Ful loude he soong *Com hider, love to me!*
This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun, [*strong bass*]
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex; [*hank of flax*]
By ounces henge his lokkès that he hadde,
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde.
But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon; [*shreds*]
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussèd up in his walet.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newè jet; [*fashion*]
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare,
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe;
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe
Bret-ful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot. [*brimful*]
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot; . . .
But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware
Ne was ther swich another pardoner,
For in his male he hadde a pilwè-beer, [*wallet*] [*pillow-case*]
Which that, he seydè, was oure lady veyl;
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl [*shred*]
That Seintè Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente. [*caught*]
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones, [*pinchbeck*]
And in a glas he haddè piggès bones.
But with thise relikès, whan that he fond
A pourè person dwellynge upon lond,

Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthès tweye;
And thus with feynèd flaterye and japes [*tricks*]
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But, trewèly to tellen attè laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste;
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an Offertorie;
For wel he wistè whan that song was songe,
He mostè preche, and wel affile his tonge
To wynnè silver, as he ful wel koude;
Therefore he song the murierly and loude. [*the more merrily*]
Now have I toold you shortly, in a clause,
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, fastè by the Belle.
But now is tymè to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilkè nyght,
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
But first, I pray yow of youre curteisye,
That ye narette it nat my vileynye, [*impute it not to my*
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere *coarseness*]
To tellè yow hir wordès and hir cheere, [*behaviour*]
Ne thogh I speke hir wordès proprely; [*i.e., literally, exactly*]
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as ever he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudèliche or large; [*freely*]
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feynè thyng, or fyndè wordès newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.

Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.
Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
'The wordès moote be cosyn to the dede.'
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholdè stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chierè made oure hoost us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon,
And servèd us with vitaille at the beste:
Strong was the wyn and wel to drynke us leste. [*pleased*]
A semely man Our Hoostè was with-alle
For to han been a marchal in an halle.
A largè man he was, with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe;
Boold of his speche, and wys and well y-taught
And of manhod hym lakkedè right naught.
Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of myrthe amongès othere thynges,
Whan that we haddè maad our rekenynges;
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordynges, trewèly,
Ye been to me right welcome, hertèly;
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so myrie a compaignye
At onès in this herberwe as is now; [*inn*]
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthè, wiste I how.
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal costè noght.
'Ye goon to Canterbury—God yow speede,
The blisful martir quitè yow youre meede! [*pay*]
And, wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye; [*prepare to tell stories*]
For trewèly confort ne myrthe is noon
To ridè by the weye doumb as a stoon;

And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erste, and doon yow som confort.
And if you liketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my juggèment,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwè, whan ye riden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soulè, that is deed,
But ye be myrie, smyteth of myn heed!
Hoold up youre hond, withouten moorè speche.'
  Oure conseil was nat longè for to seche;
Us thoghte it was noght worth to make it wys,
And graunted hym withouten moore avys, [*deliberation*]
And bad him seye his verdit, as hym leste.
  'Lordynges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shortè with your weye,
In this viáge shal tellè talès tweye,—
To Caunterburyward, I mean it so,
And homward he shal tellen otherè two,—
Of aventúres that whilom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth hym beste of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
Talès of best sentènce and most solaas, [*wisdom*]
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost,
Heere in this placè, sittynge by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And, for to makè yow the moorè mury,
I wol myselven gladly with yow ryde
Right at myn owenè cost, and be youre gyde;
And whoso wole my juggèment withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouchè-sauf that it be so
Tel me anon, withouten wordès mo,
And I wol erly shapè me therfore.'
  This thyng was graunted, and oure othès swore

With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
That he would vouchė-sauf for to do so,
And that he woldė been oure governour,
And of our talės juge and réportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,
And we wol reulėd been at his devys
In heigh and lough; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his juggėment.
And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to restė wente echon,
Withouten any lenger taryynge.
Amorwė, whan that day gan for to sprynge,
Up roos oure Hoost and was oure aller cok, [*cock for all*]
And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a little moore than paas, [*a foot-pace*]
Unto the warteryng of Seint Thomas;
And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste
And seydė, 'Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste:
Ye woot youre forward and I it yow recorde. [*know your*
If even-song and morwė-song accorde, *promise*]
Lat se now who shal telle the firstė tale.
As ever mote I drynkė wyn or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my juggėment
Shal paye for all that by the wey is spent!
Nor draweth out, er that we ferrer twynne. [*depart*]
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
'Sire Knyght,' quod he, 'my mayster and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady Prioresse,
And ye sire Clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.'

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And, shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by áventure, or sort, or cas, [*chance, destiny, or luck*]

The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght,
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght:
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun, [*right*]
By foreward and by composicioun, [*agreement*]
As he han herd; what nedeth wordès mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
He seydè, 'Syn I shal bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddès name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.'
And with that word we ryden forth oure weye;
And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manère.

THE MERRY WORDS OF THE HOST TO CHAUCER

After the Prioress had told the sad tale of Hugh of Lincoln's martyrdom, the host turned to Chaucer.

Whan seyd was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was that wonder was to se,
Til that oure Hoostè japen tho bigan [*jest*]
And thanne at erst he lookèd upon me,
And seydè thus: 'What man artow?' quod he;
'Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare;
For ever upon the ground I se thee stare.
Approchè neer, and looke up murily.'
'Now war yow, sires, and lat this man have place;
He in the waast is shape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace [*puppet*]
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvyssh by his contenaunce, [*abstracted: appearance*]
For unto no wight dooth he daliaunce.'

'Sey now somwhat, syn oother folk han sayd;
Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon.'
'Hoostė,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvele apayd, [*disappointed*]
For oother talė certės kan I noon,
But of a rym I lernėd longe agoon.'
'Ye, that is good,' quod he, 'now shul we heere
Som deyntee thyng, me thynketh by his cheere!' [*looks*]

THE PARDONERS TALE

. . . Thise riotourės thre, of whiche I telle, (*661*)
Longe erst er primė rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke;
And as they sat they herde a bellė clynke
Biforn a cors, was carried to his grave.
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave: [*boy*]
'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axė redily [*quickly*]
What cors is this that passeth heer forby,
And looke that thou reporte his namė weel.'
'Sire,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never a deel,
It was me toold er ye cam heere two houres;
He was, *pardee*, an old felawe of youres,
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-nyght,
For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peplė sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
And wente his wey withouten wordės mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence,
And maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thynketh that it werė necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie;
Beth redy for to meete hym evermoore;
Thus taughtė me my dame; I sey na-moore.'

'By Seinte Marîê!' seyde this taverner,
'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer
Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village, [*hence*]
Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page; [*hind*]
I trowe his habitacïoun be there;
To been avysèd greet wysdom it were, [*forwarned*]
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'
'Ye, Goddès armès!" quod this riotour,
'Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?
I shal hym seke by weye and eek by strete;
I make avow to Goddès dignè bones!
Herkneth, felawès, we thre been al ones,
Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,
And ech of us bicomen otherès brother,
And we wol sleen this falsè traytour, Deeth;
He shal be slayn, he that so manye sleeth,
By Goddès dignitee, er it be nyght!'
Togidres han thise thre hir trouthès plight [*troth*]
To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
As though he were his owene y-borè brother;
And up they stirte, al dronken, in this rage; [*started*]
And forth they goon towardès that villáge
Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn;
And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn;
And Cristès blessed body they to-rente, [*tear in pieces*]
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym hente. [*seize*]
Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,
Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,
An oold man and a pourè with hem mette;
This oldè man ful mekèly hem grette
And seyèd thus: 'Now, lordès, God yow see!'
The proudeste of thise riotourès three
Answerde agayn, 'What, carl with sory grace,
Why artow al for-wrappèd, save thy face? [*art thou*]
Why lyvèstow so longe in so greet age?'
This oldè man gan looke in his visage,

And seydė thus: 'For I ne kan nat fynde
A man, though that I walkėd into Ynde,
Neither in citee, ne in no village,
That woldė chaunge his youthė for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn agė stille,
As longė tyme as it is Goddės wille.
Ne Deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a restėless kaityf,
And on the ground, which is my moodrės gate,
I knokkė with my staf, erly and late,
And seyė, "Leevė mooder, leet me in! [*dear*]
Lo, how I vanysshe, flessh and blood and skyn;
Allas! whan shul my bonės been at reste?
Móoder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambrė longė tyme hath be,
Ye, for an heyrė-clowt to wrappė me!" [*hair shirt*]
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welkėd is my face. [*withered*]
'But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileynye,
But he trespasse in word, or elles in dede.
In Hooly Writ ye may your self wel rede,
Agayns an oold man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde arise; wherfore I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now,
Namoorė than ye wolde men did to yow
In agė, if that ye so longe abyde.
And God be with yow, where ye go or ryde;
I moote go thider as I have to go.'
'Nay, oldė cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so!'
Seydė this oother hasardour anon; [*gamester*]
'Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilkė traytour, Deeth,
That in this contree alle oure freendės sleeth;
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye,
Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abye, [*pay for*]

By God and by the hooly sacrement!
For soothly, thou art oon of his assent
To sleen us yongė folk, thou falsė theef!'
'Now, sires,' quod he, 'if that ye so be leef
To fyndė Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
Under a tree, and there he wole abyde;
Noght for youre boost he wole him no thyng hyde.
Se ye that ook? Right there ye shal hym fynde.
God savė yow that boghte agayn mankynde, [*redeemed*]
And yow amende!' thus seyde this oldė man;
And everich of thise riotourės ran
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde,
Of floryns fyne, of gold y-coynėd rounde,
Wel ny a seven busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thannė after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
That doun they set hem by this precious hoord.
The worste of hem he spak the firstė word.
'Bretheren,' quod he, 'taak kepė what I seye;
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye. [*jest*]
This tresor hath Fortúne unto us yeven
In myrthe and jolitee oure lyf to lyven,
And lightly as it comth so wol we spende.
Ey, Goddės precious dignitee! who wende [*weened*]
To-day, that we sholde hav so faire a grace?
But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or ellės unto youres,
(For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures,)
Thanne werė we in heigh felicitee.
But trewėly, by day it may nat bee;
Men woldė seyn that we were thevės stronge,
And for oure owenė tresor doon us honge.
This tresor moste y-caried be by nyghte
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.

Wherfore, I rede that cut among us all [*lot*]
Be drawe, and let se wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut with hertė blithe
Shal rennė to the towne, and that ful swythe, [*quickly*]
And brynge us breed and wyn ful privėly,
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is nyght we wol this tresor carie,
By oon assent, where as us thynketh best.'
That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest [*fist*]
And bad hem drawe and looke where it wol falle;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
And forth toward the toun he wente anon;
And al so soonė as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother:
'Thow knowest wel thou art my swornė brother;
Thy profit wol I tellė thee anon;
Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon,
And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departėd been among us thre;
But nathėless, if I kan shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendės torn to thee?'
That oother answerde, 'I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye;
What shal we doon, what shal we to hym seye?'
'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firtsė shrewe, [*rascal*]
'And I shal tellen thee in wordės fewe
What we shal doon, and bryngen it wel aboute.'
'I grauntė,' quod that oother, 'out of doute,
That by my trouthe I shal thee nat biwreye.'
'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Looke whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydės tweye,

Whil that thou strogelst with hym as in game,
And with thy daggere looke thou do the same;
And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
My deerė freend, bitwixen me and thee.
Thanne may we bothe oure lustės all fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille.' [*dice*]
And thus acorded been thise shrewės tweye,
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
  This yongeste, which that wente unto the toun
Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte;
'O Lord,' quod he, 'if so were that I myghte
Have al this tresor to myself allone,
Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone [*throne*]
Of God, that sholdė lyve so murye as I!'
And attė laste the feend, oure enemy,
Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson beye, [*buy*]
With which he myghtė sleen his felawes tweye;
For-why the feend foond hym in swich lyvynge,
That he hadde levė hym to sorwė brynge,
For this was outrėly his fulle entente [*utierly*]
To sleen hem bothe and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, unto a pothecarie,
And preydė hym that he hym woldė selle
Som poysoun, that he myghte his rattės quelle; [*kill*]
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe, [*hedge*]
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
And fayn he woldė wreke hym, if he myghte [*avenge himself*]
On vermyn, that destroyėd hym by nyghte. [*harmed*]
  The pothecarie answerde, 'And thou shalt have
A thyng that, al so God my soulė save,
In al this world ther nis no creätúre,
That eten or dronken hath of this confiture,
Noght but the montance of a corn of whete, [*amount*]
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete; [*give up*]

Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lassė while [*die*]
Than thou wolt goon a-paas nat but a mile;
This poysoun is so strong and violent.'
This cursėd man hath in his hond y-hent
This poysoun in a box, and sith he ran
Into the nextė strete unto a man,
And borwėd hym largė botéllės thre,
And in the two his poyson pourėd he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his owenė drynke;
For al the nyght he shoope hym for to swynke [*planned*]
In cariynge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this riotour with sory grace
Hadde filled with wyn his gretė botels thre,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?
For right as they hadde cast his deeth bifoore,
Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon,
And whan that this was doon thus spak that oon:
'Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie;'
And with that word it happėd hym, *par cas*,
To take the botel ther the poysoun was,
And drank and yaf his felawe drynke also,
For which anon they storven bothė two.
But certės, I suppose that Avycen
Wroot never in no Canón, ne in no fen [*chapter*]
Mo wonder signės of empoisonyng
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir endyng
Thus ended been thise homycidės two,
And eek the false empoysonere also.
O cursėd synne of allė cursednesse!
O traytorous homycide! O wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxúrie, and hasardrye! [*lechery and gaming*]
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye,
And othės grete, of usage and of pride!
Allas! mankyndė, how may it bitide

That to thy Creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious hertė-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas!

Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,
And ware yow fro the synne of avarice.
Myn hooly pardoun may you alle warice. [*heal*] (*906*)

THE COMPLEYNT OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE

(About 1399)

To you, my purse, and to noon other wyght
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sory now that ye been light;
For, certės, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere,
Forwhiche unto your mercy thus I crye,—
Beth hevy ageyn, or ellės mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be nyght,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonnė bright
That of yelownesse haddė never pere.
Ye be my lyf! ye be myn hertės stere! [*rudder*]
Quene of comfort and of good companye!
Beth hevy ageyn, or ellės mot I dye.

Now, purse, that be to me my lyvės light
And Savėour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toun help me thorogh your myght,
Syn that ye wole not been my tresorére;
For I am shave as nye as is a frere. [*close*]
But yet I pray unto your curtesye,
Beth hevy ageyn, or ellės mot I dye!

L'Envoy De Chaucer.

O conquerour of Brutės Albioun,
Which that by lyne and free electioun
Ben verray Kyng, this song to you I sende,
And ye that mouen al myn harm amende,
Have mynde upon my supplicacioun!

THE BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL

OR

TRUTH

(After 1386)

Flee fro the press, and dwelle with sothefastnesse
Suffice unto thy thyng though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate and clymbyng tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and welė blent overal; [*makes blind*]
Savour no more than thee bihovė shal; [*taste*]
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede, [*advise*]
And trouthė shal delivere, it is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al crokėd to redresse [*distress thyself*]
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Greet restė stant in litel besynesse;
An eek be war to sporne ageyn an al; [*awl*]
Stryve noght, as doth the crokkė with the wal. [*earthen pot*]
Dauntė thy-self, that dauntest otherės dede. [*subdue*]
And trouthė shal delivere, it is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnese. [*submission*]
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.

Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse.
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal, [*beast*]
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and let thy gost thee lede,
And trouthė shal delivere, it is no drede.

John Gower

(1325?–1408)

THE PRAISE OF PEACE

Unto the Worthy and Noble Kinge Henry the Fourth.

(About 1399)

O noble worthy king, Henry the ferthė,
In whom the gladdė fortune is befallė
The people to govérne here upon erthė,
God hath thee chose, in comfort of us allė;
The worship of this land, which was doun fallė,
Now stant upright, through grace of thy goodnessė,
Which every man is holdė for to blessė.

The highė God, of his justyce alonė,
The right which longeth to thy regalyė
Declarėd hath to stande in thy personė;
And more than God may no man justifyė.
Thy title is knowė upon thyn auncestryė;
The londes folk hath eek thy right affermėd;
So stant thy regne, of God and man confirmėd.

There is no man may say in other wisė
That God him-self ne hath the right declarėd;

Whereof the land is boun to thy srvysė,
Which for default of help hath longė carėd.
But now there is no mannės heartė sparėd
To love and serve, and workė thy plesauncė;
And all this is through Goddės purveyancė.

In allė thing which is of God begonnė
There followeth grace, if it be well govérnėd;
Thus tellen they which oldė bokės connė,
Whereof, my lord, I wot well thou art lernėd.
Ask of thy God; so shalt thou not be wernėd
Of no request (the) which is reasonable;
For God unto the good is favorable.

. . . . . .

Peace is the chief of all the worldės welthė,
And to the heaven it leadeth eek the way;
Peace is of soul and life the mannės helthė
Of pestilence, and doth the war away.
My liegė lord, tak heed of what I say,
If werrė may be left, tak peace on hondė,
Which may not be withoutė Goddės sondė.

With peace stands every crėature in restė,
Withoutė peace there may no life be glad;
Above all other good, peace is the bestė;
Peace hath him-self, whan war is all bestad; [*beset*]
The peace is safe, the war is ever adrad.
Peace is of allė charitiė the keye,
Which hath the life and soulė for to weigh.

My liegė lord, if that thee list to sechė
The sooth ensamples, what the war hath wrought,
Thou shalt well hear, of wisė mennės spechė,
That deadly werrė tourneth in-to nought.
For if these oldė bokės be well sought,

There might thou see what thing the war hath do
Both of conqúest and conqueror alsó.

For vain honóur, or for the worldès good,
They that whilom the strongè werrès made,
Where be they now? Bethink well, in thy mood,
The day is goon, the night is dark and fade;
Her crueltè, which made them thannè glade,
They sorrow now, and yet have naught the more;
The blood is shed, which no man may restore.

The war is mother of the wrongès allè;
It sleeth the priest in holy church at massè,
Forlyth the mayde, and doth her flour to fallè.
The war maketh the gretè citee lassè, [*less*]
And doth the law his reulès overpassè.
There is nothíng, whereof mischief may growè
Which is not causèd of the war, I trowè.

The war bringeth in povertè at his heelès,
Whereof the common people is sore grievèd;
The war hath set his cart on thilke wheelès
Where that fortúnè may not be believëd.
For when men wenè best to have achevèd,
Full oft it is all newè to beginnè;
The war hath nothing siker, though he winnè. [*sure*]

Therefore, my worthy prince, in Christès halvè, [*behalf*]
As for a part whose faith thou hast to guide,
Lay to this oldè sore a newè salvè,
And do the war away, what-so betíde.
Purchasè peace, and set it by thy syde,
And suffre not thy people be devoured;
So shall thy name ever after stand honóured!

. . . . . .

My worthy liegė lord, Henry by namė,
Which Engėlond hast to govérn and rightė,
Men oughten well thy pity to proclamė,
Which openly, in all the worldės sightė,
Is shewėd, with the help of God Almightė,
To yeve us peace, which long hath be debated,
Whereof thy prys shal never be abated. [*glory*]

My lord, in whom hath ever yet be foundė
Pity, withoutė spot of violencė,
Keep thilkė peace alwáy, withinnė boundė,
Which God hath planted in thy conscіencė.
So shall the cronique of thy paciencė
Among the saints be taken in-to memórie
To the loenge of perdurable glorie. [*praise*]

And to thine earthly prys, so as I can,
Which every man is holdė to commendė,
I Gower, which am all thy liegė man,
This lettre unto thine excellence I sendė,
As I, which ever unto my lyvės endė
Will prayė for the stat of thy personė,
In worship of thy sceptre and of thy thronė.

Not only to my king of peace I writė,
But to these othrė princes Christen allė,
That each of them his ownė heart enditė
And cease the war, or more mescheėf fallė.
Set eek the rightful pope upon his stallė;
Keep charitė, and draw pitė to hondė,
Maintainė law; and so the peace shall stondė.

II. ENGLISH FOLLOWERS OF CHAUCER

(Poems formerly attributed to Chaucer)

From THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF

When that Phoebus his chair of gold so hy
  Had whirlèd up to the starry sky aloft,
And in the Bole was entered certainly; [*Bull*]
  When showers sweet of rain descended soft,
  Causing the ground, felè times and oft, [*many*]
Up for to givè many an wholesome air,
And every plain was eek y-clothèd fair

With newè green, and maketh smallè flowers
  To springen here and there in field and mead:
So very good and wholesome be the showers
  That it reneweth, that was old and deede [*dead*]
  In winter-tyme; and out of every seed
Springeth the herbè, so that every wight
Of this season waxeth glad and light.

And I, so glad of the seasón thus sweet,
  Was happened thus upon a certain night;
As I lay in my bed, sleep full unmeet
  Was unto me; but, why that I ne might
  Rest, I ne wist; for there nas earthly wight, [*was not*]
As I supposè, had more hertès ease
Than I, for I n'ad sickness nor disease. [*had not*]

Wherefore I marvel greatly of my-selvè,
  That I so long withouten sleepè lay;
And up I rose, three hours after twelvè,
  About the very springing of the day,
  And on I put my gear and mine array;

And to a pleasant grovė I gan pass,
Long ere the brightė sun uprisen was,

In which were oakės great, straight as a line,
Under the which the grass so fresh of hue,
Was newly sprung; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well from his fellow grew,
With branches broad, laden with leavės new,
That sprongen out against the sonnė shenė,
Some very red, and some a glad light grenė;

Which as me thought was right a pleasant sight,
And eke the briddės songis for to hearė [*birds*]
Would have rejoicėd any earthly wight.
And I, that could not yet, in no manerė,
Hearė the nightingale of all the yearė,
Full busily hearkenėd, with heart and earė,
If I her voice perceive could any-wherė.

And at the last, a path of little brede [*breadth*]
I found, that greatly had not usėd be,
For it forgrowen was with grass and weed, [*overgrown*]
That well unneth' a wight there might it see: [*scarcely*]
'Thought I, this path somewither goeth, pardė,
And so I followėd, till it me brought
To right a pleasant herber, well y-wrought, [*arbor, resting place*]

That benchėd was, and all with turvės new [*turf*]
Freshly turved, wherof the greenė grass
So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hue,
That most like to green wool, wot I it was.
The hedge alsó, that yede as in compáss [*went*]
And closed in all the greenė herberė,
With sycamore was set and eglaterė, [*eglantine*]

Writhen in-fere so well and cunningly [*twisted together*]

That every branch and leaf grew by measurė,
Plain as a board, of one height, by and by, [*level, or smooth as a board and set close together*]
I saw never thing, I you ensurė,
So well y-don: for he that took the curė [*care*]
It to make, I trow, did all his peyn
To make it pass all those that men have seyn. [*surpass*]

And shapen was this herber, roof and all,
As is a pretty parlour, and alsó
The hedge as thick as is a castle-wall,
That, who that list without to stand or go,
Though he would all day pryen to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no; but one within well might

Perceive all those that yeden there-without [*went*]
Into the field that was on every side
Covered with corn and grass, that, without doubt,
Though one would seeken all the worldė wide,
So rich a field ne could not be espied
Upon no coast, as of the quantitee,
For of all good thing there was great plentée.

And I, that all this pleasant sight then sy, [*saw*]
Thought suddenly I felt so sweet an air
Come of the eglantere, that certainly,
There is no heart, I deem, in such despair,
Ne with no thoughtės froward and contrair
So overlaid, but it should soon have bote, [*relief, succor*]
If it had onės felt this savour sote. [*once, sweet*]

And as I stood and cast aside mine y [*eye*]
I was ware of the fairest medle-tree [*medlar tree*]
That ever yet in all my life I sy,
As full of blossomės as it might be.

Therein a goldfinch leaping prettily
From bough to bough, and as him list, he eet
Here and there, of buds and flowers sweet.

And to the herber-sidi was joiníng
This fairė tree, of which I have you told;
And at the last the bird began to sing,
When he had eaten what he eatė wold,
So passing sweetly, that, by manifold,
It was more pleasant than I could devise:
And when his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingalė with so merry a note
Answėred him, that all the woodė rong
So suddenly, that, as it were a sote, [*fool*]
I stood amazed; so was I with the song
Through ravishėd, that, until late and long
No wist I in what place I was, ne wherė;
And ay, me thought, she sung e'en by mine erė.

Wherefore about I waited busily [*watched intently*]
On every side, if I her mightė see:
And, at the last, I gan full well espy
Where she sat in a fresh green laurel tree
On the further side, even right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smell
According to the eglantere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great plesyr
That, as me thought, I surely ravished was
Into Parádise, where my desyr
Was for to be, and no further to pass
As for that day, and on the sotė grass [*sweet*]
I sat me down; for, as for mine intent,
The birdės song was more conveniént, [*suited to my mood*]

And more pleasaunt to me, by many fold,
  Than meat or drink, or any other thing;
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
  The wholesome savours eke so comforting
  That, as I deemèd, sith the béginning [*since*]
Of the world, was never seen, or than, [*then, at that time*]
So pleasant a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat, the briddès hearkening thus,
  Me thought that I heard voices suddenly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
  That ever any wight, I trow trulý,
  Heard in his life, for that the harmony
And sweet accord was in so good musyk,
Thát the voice to angels most was lyk.

At last out of a grovè even by, [*near by*]
  That was right goodly and pleasánt to sight,
I saw where there came singing lustily
  A world of ladies; but to tell aright
  Their great beautè, it lieth not in my might,
Ne their array; nevertheless, I shall
Tell you a part, though I speak not of all.

. . . . . .

From A PRAISE OF WOMEN

For this ye knowè well, though I would lie,
  In women is all truth and steadfastness;
For in good faith I never of them sye [*saw*]
  But much worship, bounty, and gentleness, [*goodness*]
  Right comyng, fair, and full of mekèness,
Good and glad, and lowly, I you ensure,
Is this goodlý angelic crèature.

And if it hap a man be in disease, [*discomfort*]
She doth her business and her full fain
With all her might, him to comfórt and please
If fro his disease she mightė him restrain;
In word nor deed, I wis, she will not feign,
But with all her might she doth her businéss
To bringė him out of his heavinéss.

Lo, what gentleness these women have,
If we could know it for our rudėness!
How busy they be us to keep and save,
Both in health, and also in sickness!
And always right sorry for our distress,
In every manner; thus they shewė ruth,
That in them is all goodnessė and truth.

And since in them are gentleness and trouth,
Worship, bounty, and kindness evermore,
Let ne'er this gentylnessė through your slouth
In her kind truth be aught forlorė, [*at all lost or diminished*]
That in woman is, and hath been full yorė;
For in revérence of the heaven's Queen,
We ought to worship all womén that been.

For of all creátures that e'er were born,
This wot ye well, a woman was the beste:
By her recovered was the bliss that we had lorne, [*lost*]
And through the woman shall we come to reste,
And be y-saved, if that our selfė lest; [*pleases*]
Wherefore, me thinketh, if that we had grace,
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I read that, to our livės ende,
Fro this time forth, the while that we have space,
That we have trespassed, púrsue to amend,

Praying our Lady, well of allė grace,
To bringė us untó that blissful place,
Where she and all good women shall be infere [*together*]
In heaven above, among the angels clear.

MERCILES BEAUTE

Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautė of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my hertė kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
My hertės wounde, whyl that hit is grene,
Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautė of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthė shal be sene.
Your eyen two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautė of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my hertė kene.

Sir Thomas Clanvowe

(About 1400)

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

(About 1405)

The god of love, a! *benedicite!*
How mighty and how great a lord is he!

For he can make of lowė heartės hye,
And of hye low, and likė for to dye,
And hardė heartės he can maken free.

And he can make, within a little stoundė [*time*]
Of sekė folk full wholė, fresh and soundė, [*sick*]
And of the wholė, he can makė seke;
And he can binden and unbinden eke
What he will have bounden or unboundė.

To tell his might my wit may not suffysė;
For he may do all that he will devysė
For he can make of wisė folk full nice,
And eke in lyther folk destroyen vice; [*evil*]
And proudė heartės he can make agrysė. [*afraid*]

Shortly, all that e're he wills he may;
Ageinės him there dare no wight say nay. [*against*]
For he can glad and grievė whom him liketh;
And whom he will, he laugheth or he syketh; [*makes laugh or sigh*]
And most his might he showeth ever in May.

For every trewė gentle heartė free
That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
Ageinės May now shall have some stirríng,
Either to joy, or ellės to mourníng,
In no sesóun so great, as thinketh me.

For when they mowė hear the briddės sing, [*may*]
And see the flowers and the leavės spring,
That bringeth into heartės rémembráunce
A kind of ease, mingled with greváunce,
And lusty thoughtės fullė of longíng.

John Lydgate

(About 1370–1451)

IN PRAISE OF CHAUCER

(From the *Prologue* to *The Story of Thebes*. About 1420)

. . . Him that was, if I shall not feign,
Flower of Poets, throughout of all Britáin,
Which soothly had moost of excellencè
In Rhetorykè and in eloquencè.
Read his makíng, who list the truthè findè, [*works, poetry*]
Which never shall appallen in my mindè, [*grow pale*]
But always fresh been in my memoriè;
To whom be yeve praise, honour, and gloriè. [*given*]
Of well sayíng firstè in our langúage;
Chief Registrer in this our pilgrimage,
All that he told, forgetting naught at all,
Not feignèd tales, nor thing historical,
With many proverbs, diverse and uncouth, [*unfamiliar*]
By the rehearsing of his sugared mouth.
Of eachè thingè keeping in substánce
The sentence whole withoutè variánce,
Voiding the chaff, soothly for to sain, [*say*]
Illumining the truè pickèd grain,
By crafty writing of his sawès sweet. [*sayings*]

THE DAISY

(From *A Goodly Balade of Chaucer*)

Daisy of light, very ground of comfórtè, [*are called, as*
The Sonnès daughter ye hight, as I redè; *I understand*]

For when he westreth, farewell your disportè! [*sets in the*
By your natúre anon, right for pure dredè *west*]
Of the rude night that with his boistrous wedè [*garment*]
Of darkness shadoweth our emysperè, [*hemisphere*]
Then closen ye, my livès lady derè!

Dawning the Day to his kyndè resortè, [*usual place*]
Phoebus, your father, with his streamès redè
Adorneth the morrowè, cónsuming the sortè
Of misty cloudès that would overledè
True humble heartès with her mistihedè, [*mistiness*]
Nere comfort a-dayès, when eyen clerè [*by daytime*]
Disclose and spread my livès lady derè.

Je voudray, but the greatè God disposeth [*I would*]
And maketh casual, by His providence, [*uncertain*]
Such thing as mannès frail wit purposeth,
All for the best, if that our conscience
Not grudge it, but in humble pacience
It receive: for God saith without fable,
A faithful heart is ever acceptáble

THE TESTAMENT OF JOHN LYDGATE

(From *Testamentum Johannis Lydgate*)

. . . . . .

Midst of a cloister, painted on a wall,
I saw a crucifix with wounds not small,
With this word VIDE, written there beside,—
"*Behold my meekness, Child, and learn thy pride.*"

The which word when I came to understand,
In my last agè taking the sentènce, [*the full meaning*]
Thinking thereon, my pen I took in hand,

And straightway wrote with humble reverence,
On this word *vide* with much diligence,
In memory of Christès passioun
This little song, this compilatioun.

. . . . . .

"Turn home again, thy sin do thou forsake,
Behold and see if aught be left behind;
To mercy I am ready thee to take,
Give me thy heart and be no more unkind;
Thy love and mine, together do them bind,
And let them never part in any wise;
When thou wast lost, thy soul again to find,
My blood I gave for thee in sacrifice.

. . . . . .

Tarry no longer towards thine heritage:
Haste on thy way and be of right good cheer;
Go each day onward on thy pilgrimage,
Think how short time thou shalt abidė here!
Thy place is built above the starrès clear,
No earthly palace wrought in stately wise.
Come on, my friend, my brother most entere, [*entire, complete*]
For thee I shed my blood in sacrifice."

Thomas Hoccleve, *or* Occleve

(About 1370–about 1450)

THOMAS HOCCLEVE'S COMPLAINT

THE PROLOGUE

After that Harvest gathered had his sheavės,
And that the brown sesóun of Michaelmessė

Was come, and gan the trees rob of their leavés
That green had been and in lustý freshnessé,
And them into colóur of yellownessé
Had died, and down were throwen under foot,
That changé sank into mine heartés root.

For freshly brought it to my rémembrancé,
That stableness in this world there is none;
There is no thing but change and variancé;
How rich a man may be or well begun,
Endure it shall not, he shall it foregone.
Death under footé shall him thrust a-down:
For that is every wight's conclusioun.

Which for to waive is in no mannés might,
How rich he be, strong, lusty, fresh, and gay.
And at November's end, upon a night,
Sighing most sore, as in my bed I lay,
For this and other thoughts, which many a day
Before I had, sleep came none in mine eye,
So vexéd me the thoughtful malady.

. . . . . .

The grief about my heart so sorely swal [*swelled*]
And bolnéd ever to and fro so sore, [*increased, swelled*]
That nedés out I must then with it all:
I thought I could not keep it close no more,
Nor let it in me, being old and hoar:
And for to prove I came of a womán,
I burst out on the morrow, and thus began.

Here endeth my prologue, and followeth my Complaint.

THE COMPLAINT

Almighty God, as liketh His goodnéss,
Visiteth folk all-day as men may see,

With loss of goods and bodily sicknéss,
And among other He forgat not me;
Witness thereof the mad infirmitie
Which that I had, as many a man well knew,
And which out of myself me cast and threw.

. . . . . .

As said is in the Psalter, might I say,
All they that saw me fled away from me;
Forgot I was, all out of mind away,
Like as the dead, from heartès charitie;
To a lost vessel likened might I be;
For many a wight aboutè me dwellíng,
Heard I me blame and put in díspraising.

. . . . . .

Some time I thought as lite as any man, [*little*]
For to have fallen in that wildernessè,
But God, when that Him list, may, will, and can,
Our health withdraw and send a wight sicknessè,
Though man be well this day, no sykernessè [*security*]
To him is promised that it shall endure;
God now can hurt and now can heal and cure.

. . . . . .

Through God's just doom and through His judgèment,
And for my bestè now I take and deem,
Gave that good Lord to me my punishment;
In wealth I took of Him no heed or yeme, [*care*]
Him for to please and Him honóur and queme, [*appease*]
And me He gave a bone on which to gnaw,
Me to correct and of Him to have awe.

He gave me wit, and wit He took away
When that He saw that I it sore misspent,

And gave again, when it was His to pay
And granted me my guiltès to repent,
And then henceforth to set all mine intent
Unto His Deity to do pleasaunce,
And to amend my sinful governaunce.

Laud and honóur and thanks unto Thee be,
Lord God that salve art to all my heaviness!
Thanks for my wealth and mine adversitie,
Thanks for mine age and for my sickèness,
And thanks be to Thine infinite goodnéss
For all Thy gifts and benefices all,
And to Thy mercy and Thy grace I call.

A LAMENT FOR CHAUCER

(From *The Regimen of Princes.* About 1412)

But welaway! so is my hearte woe
That the honóur of English tongue is deed, [*dead*]
Of whom I used to have counsél and rede. [*instruction*]

O master dear, and father reverent!
My master Chaucer, flower of eloquence,
Mirror of fructúous entendement, [*understanding*]
O, universal father in sciénce!
Alas! that thou thine excellent prudénce
On thy bed mortal mightest not bequeathè!
What ailèd death? alas! why would he slay thee?

O death! thou didest not harm singular [*a single injury*]
In slaying him, but all this land it smarteth;
But ne'ertheless, thou hast not any power
His name to slay; his high virtúe upstarteth
Unslain by thee, which aye us lively hearteth. [*hearteneth*]

With bookés of his ornate índiting,
That are to all this land illumining.

. . . . . .

Simple my spirit, scarce my letterure [*learning*]
Unto your excellency for to write
Mine inward love, and yet, in aventure
I put myself, although I can but lyte. [*know but little*]
My dearé master—(God his soul requite!)
And father, Chaucer, fain would have me taught;
But I was dull, and little learned or naught.

Alas! my worthy master honourable,
This landés very treasure and richéssé,
Death, by thy death, hath harm irreparable
Done unto us; his vengeable duressé [*revengeful*
Despoilèd hath this land of the sweetnéssé *compulsion*]
Of rhetoric; for unto Tullius
Was never man so like amongest us.

Who was there nearer in philosophie
To Aristotle, in our tongue, but thou?
The foot-steps of Virgíl in poesie
Thou followedst sure, this men know well enow. [*enough*]
That cumber-world, that thee, my master slow, [*useless*
I would were slain! death went too hastily *creature*] [*slew*]
To run on thee, and rive thy life of thee.

Death hath but small consideracioun
Unto the virtuoús, I have espied,
No more, as showeth the probacioun, [*proof, as experience*
Than to a vicious master-scoundrel tried; [*proved*] *shows*]
Among a crowd, is every man maistríed; [*mastered*]
By him, as well the rich man as the poor;
Learned or unlearned, alike they stand—no more.

He might have held his vengeance yet awhile,
Till that some man might equal to thee be.
Nay, let that be! he knew well that this isle
Might never bring forth man like unto thee,
And his officè needès do must he;
God bade him so, I trust as for the best;
O master, master, God thy soulè rest!

. . . . . .

The firstè finder of our fair langúage,
Hath writ of death as many another one,
So highly well that it is my dotáge [*joolishness*]
To speak, I cannot reach what they have done.
Alas! my father from the world is gone—
My worthy master Chaucer, him I mean—
Be thou advócate for him, heaven's queen!

As thou well knowest, O blessèd virgíne,
With loving heart, and high devocioun
In thine honóur he wrought full many a line;
Grant now thy help and thy promocioun!
To God thy Son, make thou a mocioun, [*motion*]
How he thy servant was, maidén Marie,
And let his love flower and fructifie.

Although his life be quenched, the resemblauncè
Of him hath in me só fresh liveliness
That, to put other men in remembrauncè
Of his persón, I have here his likenéss
Essayèd, to this end in truthfulness,
That they who have of him least thought and mind,
By this portrayal may again him find.

ROUNDEL, OR CHANSON TO SOMER

(1407 ?)

Somer, that ripenest mannès sustenancè
With wholesome heatè of the sun's warmnessè,
All kinds of men are bounden thee to blessè!

Aye thankèd be thy friendly governancè,
And thy fresh look of mirth and of gladnessè!
Somer, that ripenest mannes sustenance.

To heavy folk of thee the rémembrancè
Is salve and ointment to their sickénessè,
Wherefore, we thus shall sing in Christémessè,
Somer, that ripenest mannes sustenance.

Stephen Hawes

(About 1475–about 1523)

THE EPITAPH OF GRAUNDE AMOUR

(From *The Pastime of Pleasure.* 1506 ?)

O earth! on earth it is a wondrous case
That thou art blindè and will not thee know;
Though upon earth thou hast thy dwelling place
Yet earth at last must needs thee overthrow.
Thou thinkest thee to be no earth, I trow;
For if thou didst, thou wouldest then apply
To fórsake pleasure and to learn to die.

O earth, of earth why art thou so proud?
  Now what thou art, call to remembrance;
Open thine ears unto my song aloud.
  Is not thy beauty, strength and puissance,
  Though becladde with cloth of pleasaunce,
Very earth and also wormès fode, [*food*]
When earth to earth shall turne too the blode?

. . . . . .

And earth for earth why hast thou envy?
  And the earth upon earth to be more prosperous
Than thou thyself, fretting thee inwardly?
  It is a sin right foul and vicious
  And unto God also full odious.
Thou thinkest, I trow, there is no punishment
Ordained for sin by equal judgément.

Toward heaven to follow on the way
  Thou art full slow, and thinkest nothing
That thy nature doth full sore decay
  And death right fast is to thee coming.
  God grant thee mercy, but no time enlongyng. [*prolonging*]
When thou hast time, take time and space:
When time is past, lost is the time of grace.

And when earth to earth is nexte to revert
  And nature low in the last age,
Of earthly treasure earth doth set his herte
  Insatiately upon covetyse to rage [*covetousness*]
  He thinketh not his lyfe shall asswage;
His good is his God, with his great rychès;
He thinketh not for to leave it doutlès.

The pompèd carkès with food delicióus,
  Earth often feeds with corrupt gluttony,
And not at all with workès virtuous;

The soul doth feed right well ententifly,
But without measure, full inordinately,
The body liveth, and will not remember
How earth to earth must his strength surrender.

. . . . . .

O mortal folk, you may behold and see
How I lie here, sometime a mighty knight;
The end of joy and all prosperity
Is death at last, thorough his course and might!
After the day there cometh the derkė night;
For though the day be never so longė,
At last the bells ring to even-songė.

III. SCOTTISH POETS AFTER CHAUCER

King James the First

(1394–1437)

THE KING'S QUAIR

(About 1425)

(FROM CANTO II)

Bewailing in my chamber thus alone,
Despaired of all joy and remedye,
For, tired of my thoughts, and woe-begone,
Unto the window 'gan I walk in hye, [*haste*]
To see the world and folk that went forbye; [*past*]
As, for the time (though I of mirthė's food
Might have no more), to luik it did me good.

Now was there made, fast by the Tower's wall,
A garden fair, and in the corners set
An arbour green, with wandès long and small,
Railèd about; and so with treès set
Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet, [*knitted close*]
That life was none walking there forbye, [*lije, living*
That might within scarce any wight espye. *person*]

So thick the boughès met, the leavès green,
Beshaded all the alleys that were there;
And midst of every arbour might be seen
The sharpè, greenè, sweetè, juniper,
Growing so fair, with branches here and there;
That, as it seemèd to a life without,
The boughès spread the arbour all about.
And on the smallè greenè twistis sat [*twigs*]
The little sweetè nightingale, and sung
So loud and clear the hymnès consecrat
Of Luvè's use; now soft, now loud among, [*promis-*
That all the garden and the wallès rung *cuously*]
Right of their song; and on the couplet next [*right of,*
Of their sweet harmony: and lo the text! *entirely with*]

"Worshippè, ye that lovers be, this May,
For of your bliss the kalends are begun,
And sing with us, away, Winter, away,
Come, Summer, come, the sweet seasoun and sun.
Awake, for shame! that have your heavens won,
And amorously lift up your headès all,
Thank Luve that list you to his mercy call."

When they this song had sung a little thrawe, [*while*[
They stent awhile, and therewith unafraid [*stopped*]
As I beheld and cast mine eyen a-lawe, [*below*]
From bough to bough they hoppèd and they played,
And freshly in their birdès kind arrayed

Their feathers new, and fret them in the sun, [*spread*]
And thankèd Luve, that had their matès won.

This was the plainè ditty of their note,
And therewithal unto myself I thought,
"What life is this, that makès birdès dote?
What may this be, how cometh it of ought?
What needeth it to be so dearly bought?
It is nothing, trow I, but feignèd cheer,
And that men list to counterfetè cheer."

A BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL

Since through virtúe increases dignity,
And virtue, flower and root, is of noblay, [*nobility*]
Of any weal or what estate thou be,
His steps ensue and dread thou no affray;
Exile all vice, and follow truth alwáy;
Luve most thy God, who first thy luve began,
And for each inch He will thee quit a span.

Be not o'er proud in thy prosperity,
For as it comes, so will it pass away;
Thy time to count is short, thou may'st well see,
For of green grass soon cometh withered hay.
Labour in truth while there is light of day.
Trust most in God, for He best guide thee can,
And for an inch He will thee quit a span.

Since word is thrall, and only thought is free,
Tame thou thy tongue, that power has and may,
Shut thou thine eyes on worldly vanity;
Refrain thy lust and hearken what I say;
Seize lest thou slide, and creep forth on the way;
Keep thy behest unto thy God and man,
And for each inch He will thee quit a span.

Robert Henryson

(About 1425 ?–1506 ?)

THE COMPLAINT OF CRESSID

"O sop of sorrow sunken into care!
O captive Cressid! Now and ever-mair
Gane is thy joy and all thy mirth in eird; [*on earth*]
Of all blithenéss now art thou bleachéd bare;
There is na salve may salve thee of thy sair!
Fell is thy fortune, wicked is thy weird;
Thy bliss is banished, and they bale in breird! [*in leaf, or*
Under the earth God grant I graven were, [*buried*] *sprouting*]
Hidden from Greece and Troy, my name unheard!

"Where is thy chamber, pleasant to be seen
With beauteous bed, and benches 'broidered bene, [*beautifully*
Spices and wines for thy collatioun; *embroidered*]
The cuppés all of gold and silver shene,
The sweet-meats servéd up in platters clean,
With sauce of saffron of a good seasóun, [*seasoning*]
Thy garments gay, with mony a gudely gown,
Thy pleasant lawn, pinned with a golden prene? [*brooch*]
All is arrear thy great royál renown!

"Where is thy garden, with its grasses gay
And freshé flourés, whilk the queen Floray
Had painted pleasantly in every pane, [*plot, bed*]
Where thou wast wont full merrily in May
To walk, and tak the dew when it was day,
And hear the merle and mavis mony ane; [*black-bird and*
With ladies fair that carrolling are gane, *thrush*]
And see the royal rout in their array
In garments gay, garnished in every grain? [*colour, hue*]

"Thy great triumphant fame and high honóur,
When thou wast called of earthly wights the flour?
All is decayed; thy fate is fallen so,
Thy high estate is turned to darkness dour!
This leper's lodge tak for thy beauteous bour,
And for thy bed scant straw is now enow,
Fine fare and chosen wine na more I know,
But mouldy bread, perry, and cider sour; [*a fermented drink*]
Save cup and dipper, now is all ago. [*gone*]

"My clear voice and my courtly carrolling,
Where I was wont with ladies for to sing,
Is ráw as rook, most hideous, hoír, and hace; [*hoarse*]
My pleasant port all others précelling, [*excelling*]
I more than all to all did pleasure bring;
Now is deformed the fashion of my face;
To luik on it na man now liking hes. [*has*]
Soppèd in sorrow, I say with sair sighíng—
Lodgèd among the leper-folk—"Alace!" [*Alas*]

"O ladies fair of Troy and Greece, attend
My misery whilk nane may comprehend,
My fortune fell, my infelicitie,
My great mischíef, whilk na man can amend,
Be ware in time, approaches near the end,
And in your mind ane mirrour mak of me.
As I am now, perádventure that ye,
For all your micht, may come to that same end,
Or else be ware, if ony ware may be.

"Naught is your fairness but ane fading flour,
Naught is your famous laud and high honóur,
But wind inflate in other mennès ears;
Your rosy red to rotting shall retour. [*return*]
Example mak of me in your memour,
Whilk of sic things such woeful witness bears,

All wealth in earth away as wind it wears;
Be ware therefore! approaches near the hour;
Fortune is fickle, when she begins and steers." [*once takes the helm; governs*]

Thus chiding with her dreary destiny,
Weeping, she woke the night fra end to end,
But all in vain: her dole, her careful cry
Micht naught remeid, nor yet her mourning mend. [*remedy*]
Ane leper-lady rose, and till her wend, [*to her went*]
And said, "Why spurnest thou against the wall,
To slay thyself, and mend na-thing at all?

"Since that thy weeping doubles but thy woe,
I counsel thee mak virtue of ane need,
To learn to clap thy clapper to and fro,
And live after the law of leper-leid." [*leper-folk*]
There was na boot, but forth with shame she geid [*help*] [*went*]
Fra place to place, while cauld and hunger sair
Compellèd her to be ane rank beggair.

At that same time, of Troy the garrisoun,—
Whilk had for chieftain worthy Troilus,—
Through jeopardy of war had stricken doun
Knightès of Greece in number marvellous
With great triúmph and laud victorious
Again to Troy richt royally they rade
The way where Cressid with the lepers bade. [*abode; lived*]

Seeing them pass, the lepers with ane steven, [*one voice*]
All gave ane cry and shook their cups with speed;
Said: "Worthy lords, for Goddès love of heaven,
Unto us lepers give of your alms-deed!"
Then to their cry great Troilus took heed;
He pitiful, near to the place 'gan pass
Where Cressid sat, not witting who she was.

Then upon him she cast up baith her een,
And with ane blink it came into his thought,
That he some time before her face had seen;
But she was in sic plight he knew her naught,
Yet still her liuk into his mind it brought
The sweet viságe and amorous blinkíng [*glance*]
Of fair Cressíd, sometime his own darlíng.

Na wonder was, in truth, in mind that he
Tuik her figúre sa soon, and lo! now, why;
The image of ane thing perchance may be
So deep imprinted in the fantasy,
That it deludes the wittés outwardly,
And so appears in form and like estate
Within the mind as it was figurait. [*figured, imagined*]

Ane spark of luve within his heart would spring,
And kindled all his body in ane fire;
And fever hot, and sweat and trembilling
Him tuik, till he was ready to expire;
To bear his shield his breast began to tire;
Within ane while he changèd mony hue,
And natheless not ane anither knew.

For knightly pity and memorial
Of fair Cressíd, ane girdle 'gan he tak,
Ane purse of gold, and mony gay jewáll,
And in the skirt of Cressid doun 'gan swak; [*cast*]
Then raid away, and not ane word he spak,
Pensive in heart, till he came to the toun,
And for great care oft-times almost fell doun.

The leper-folk to Cressid then 'gan draw,
To see the equal distributioun
Of all the alms; but when the gold they saw,
Ilk ane to ither privily 'gan roun, [*whisper*]

And said: "Yon lord has more affectioun,
How e'er it be, unto yon lazarous [*plague-stricken*]
Than to us all; we know by his almous." [*alms*]

"What lord is yon?" quoth she, "can ye not tell,
Has done to us sa great humanity?"
"Yes," quoth a leper-man, "I know him well;
Sir Troilus it is, gentill and free!"
When Cressid understood that it was he,
Stronger than steel struck swift a bitter stound [*pain*]
Thoróugh her heart; doun fell she to the ground!

Then she, with stifling sighs, with pain possessed,
With mony careful cry and sad;—"Ochane! [*och hone, alas*]
A storm of sorrows now besiege my breast!
What shall I do,—a wretch wrapped up in pain?"
Then swounèd she oft ere she could refrain,
And ever in her swouning cried she thus:
"O false Cressíd, and true Knight Troilus!

"Thy luve, thy loyalty and gentleness,
I counted small in my prosperitie;
Sa elevait I was in wantonness,
I climbed upon the fickle wheel sa hie;
All faith and luve I promisèd to thee,
Was in the same fickle and frivolous;
O false Cressíd, and true Knight Troilus!

. . . . . .

"Luvers, be ware, and tak guid heed about
Whom that ye luve, for whom ye suffer pain;
I let you wit, there is richt few thereout [*know*]
Whom ye may trust, to have true luve again;
Prove when ye will, your labour is in vain,
Therefore I rede ye tak them as ye find; [*advise*]
For they are set as weather-cock in wind.

"Because I know their great unstableness,
  Brukkle as glass, unto myself I say, [*brittle*]
I see in each as great unfaithfulness,
  Unconstant ever, and untrue of fay. [*faith*]
  Though some be true, I wot richt few are they,
Who findeth truth, let him his lady praise,
Nane but my self, I do accuse," she says.

When this was said, with paper she sat doun
  And in this manner made her *Testament:*—
"Here I bequeath my corpse and carioun
  With wormès and with toadès to be rent;
  My cup and clapper, and mine ornament,
And all my gold the leper-folk shall have,
When I am dead, to bury me in grave.

"This royal ring, set with this ruby red,
  Whilk Troilus in dowry did me send,
To him again I leave when I am dead,
  To make my careful deed unto him kend.
  Thus I conclude shortly, and mak an end.
My spirite I leave to Dian where she dwells,
To walk with her in woodès waste and wells.

"O Diomed! both belt and brooch thou hast,
  Whilk Troilus as token did me bring
Of his true luve!" And with that word she passed. [*died*]
  And soon ane leper-man tuik off the ring,
  Then buried her withouten tarrying.
To Troilus forthwith the ring he bare,
And of Cressíd the death he 'gan declare.

When he had heard her great infirmitie,
  Her legacy and lamentatioun,
And how she ended in such poverté,
  All dazed for woe, he sank doun in a swoun;

For great sorrów his heart to burst was boun, [*ready*]
Sighing full sadly, said: "I can no more;
She was untrue, and woe is me therefore!"

Some said he made a tomb of marble gray,
And writ her name and superscriptioun,
And laid it on her grave, where that she lay,
In letters gold, containing this resoún:—
"Lo! fair ladíes, Cressíd of Troyès toun,
Counted sometime the flour of womanheid,
Under this stane, late leper, lieth deid!"

Now, worthy women, in this ballad short,
Made for your worship and instructioun,
Of charity I monish and exhort
Mix not your luve with false deceptioun.
Bear in your mind this short conclusioun
Of fair Cressíd, as I have said before;
Since she is dead, I speak of her na móre.

THE TALE OF THE PADDOCK AND THE MOUSE

Upon a time, as Æsop could report,
A little Mouse came to a river side;
She micht not wade, her shankés were sa short;
She could not swim, she had na horse to ride;
Of very force hehovêd her to bide,
And to and fra beside the river deep,
Crying she ran, with mony a piteous peep.

"Help ower, help ower!" this silly Mouse gan cry,
"For Goddés luve, some body o'er this brim!" [*flood*]
With that a Paddock in the water by, [*toad*]
Put up her heid, and on the bank gan clym; [*climb*]
Whilk by natúre could duck, and gaily swim.

With voice full rauk, she said in this manéir: [*hoarse,*
"Gude morn, Sir Mouse, what is your errand here?" *raucous*]

"See'st thou," quoth she, "of corn yon jolie flat [*pretty*
Of ripened oats, of barley, pease, and wheat; *plain*]
I am hungríe, and fain would be thereat,
But I am stoppit by this water great;
And on this side I get na thing to eat
But hardest nuts, whilk with my teeth I bore.
Were I beyond, my feast were far the more.

I haf na boat, here is na marinére;
And though there were, I haf no freight to pay."
Quoth she: "Sister, let be your heavy cheer;
Do my counsél, and I shall find the way
Withouten horse, brig, boat, or yet gallay, [*bridge*]
To bring you o'er safel'y—be not afeard—
Nor even wet the tip of your long beard."

"I haf great wonder," quoth the silly Mouse,
"How thou can'st float without feathér or fin!
This river is sa deep and dangerous,
Methinks that thou would drownèd be therein.
Tell me, therefore, what facultie or gin, [*what power or what contrivance*]
Thou hast to bring thee o'er this water?" Than [*then*]
Thus to declare, the Paddock soon began:

"With my twa feet," quoth she, "webbèd and braid, [*broad*]
Instead of oars, I row the stream full still;
And though the flood be perilous to wade,
Baith to and fra I row at my ain will.
I may not drown,—for why?—my open gill
Devoidis aye the water I resaif, [*empties*] [*receive*]
Therefore to droun, forsooth, na dreid I haif." [*have*]

The Mouse looked hard upon her fronsit face, [*rough*]
  Her wrinkled cheekés, and her lippés wide;
Her hanging browés, and her voice sa hace; [*hoarse*]
  Her sprawling leggés, and her harsky hide. [*harsh*]
  She ran aback, and to the Paddock cried:
"If I have ony skill in phisnomie, [*physiognomy*]
Thou hast some part of falsehood and envie.

"For wise men say the inclinatioun
  Of mannés thought proceedeth commonlie
After the corporal complexioun
  To guid or ill, as nature will applie;
  A twisted face, a twisted phisnomie. [*nature*]
The auld provérb is witness of this lorum: [*lore*]
Distortum vultum, sequitur distortio morum."

"Na," quoth the Toad, "that proverb is not true;
  For fairest things are oftentimes found faikyn. [*deceitful*]
The blue-berriés, though they be sad of hue,
  Are gathered when the primrose is forsaken.
The face may fail to be the heart's true takin, [*token*]
Therefore I find this Scripture all in place:
Thou should not judge a man after his face.

"Though I unwholesome be to luik upon,
  I have na cause why I should blamèd be;
Were I as fair as jolie Absalom,
  I am na causer of that great beautie.
  This difference in form and qualitie
Almighty God hath causéd Dame Natúre
To print, and set in every creature.

"Of some the face may be full flourishing;
  Of silken tongue and cheer richt amorous;
With mind inconstant, false, and varying,
  With tricky ways, and full of sly deceit."

"Leave preaching," quoth the Mouse, who longed to eat,
"And by what craft, now mak me understand,
You mean to bear me unto yonder land!"

"Thou know'st," quoth she, "a body that has need,
To help himself should mony methods cast; [*contrive*]
Therefore go tak a double twisted threid, [*thread*]
And bind thy leg to mine with knottès fast;
I shall thee learn to swim, be not aghast."
"Is that thy counsel?" quoth the silly Mous,
To prove that play 't were over perilous!

"Should I be bound and fast where I am free,
In hope of help? Nay, then beshrew us baith,
For I micht lose baith life and libertie!
If it were so, who might amend my skaith? [*hurt*]
But wilt thou swear to me the murther-aith, [*oath*]
To bring me ower, renouncing fraud or ill,
And safe from hurt?" "In faith," quoth she, "I will."

Then up she gazed, and to the heavens gan cry:
"O Jupiter! of Nature, god and king,
I mak an aith truly to thee, that I
This little Mouse shall o'er this water bring."
This aith was made. The Mouse not pérceiving
The false device of this foul trickster Taid, [*toad*]
Tuik threid, and bound her leg, as she her bade.

Then foot for foot they leapt baith in the brim;
But in their minds they were quite different:
The Mouse thought of na thing but for to swim,
The Paddock for to drown set her intent. [*drown her*]
When they had gained mid-stream, as on they went,
With all her force the Paddock pressèd down,
And thought the Mouse without mercíe to drown.

Perceiving this, the Mouse on her gan cry:
"Traitor to God, and man-sworn unto me,
Thou swore the murther-aith right now, that I
Sans force or harm should ferriėd be and free!"
And when she saw there was but do or dee,
With all her micht she forcėd her to swim
And struggled on the Paddock's back to clim. [*climb*]

The dread of death then made her strength increase;
Forced her to save herself with micht and main.
The Mouse upwárd, the Paddock down gan preis; [*press*]
Now to, now fra, now duck, now up again,
This silly Mouse thus plungėd in great pain,
So fought as lang as breath was in her breist,
Till at the last she cryėd for a priest.

As thus she sighed, a Gled perched on a bough, [*hawk*]
And to this wretched battle tuik guid heid, [*heed*]
And with a whisk, ere either one knew how,
He clutched his claw between them in the threid;
Then to the land he bore them with guid speed,
Glad of his prize, which shrieked for fear of skaith,
Then loosed he them, and ruthless slew them baith.

CONTENT

(From *The Tale of the Upland Mouse and the Burgess Mouse*)

Blessėd be simple life, withouten dreid;
Blessėd be sober feast in quietie;
Who has enough, of no more has he need,
Though it be little into quantitie.
Great abundánce, and blind prosperitie,
Ofttimės mak an ill conclusion;
The sweetest life, therefore, in this countrie,
Is to live safe, with small possession.

William Dunbar

(1460–1520 ?)

NO TREASURE WITHOUT GLADNESS

Be merry, man! and tak not sair in mind [*sore*]
  The wavering of this wretched world of sorrow!
To God be humble and to thy friend be kind,
  And with thy neighbours gladly lend and borrow:
  His chance to-nicht, it may be thine to-morrow;
Be blithe in heart for ony adventúre;
  For oft with wise men, 't has been said aforrow, [*afore*]
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Mak thee gude cheer of it that God thee sends,
  For warldès wrack but welfare nocht avails.
No gude is thine, save only that thou spends;
  Remanent all thou brookis but with bales.
  Seek to soláce when sadness thee assails;
In dolour long thy life may not endure,
  Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Follow on pity, flee trouble and debate,
  With famous folk aye hold thy company;
Be charitable and humble in thine estate,
  For wardly honour lastès but a cry; [*short time*]
  For trouble in earth tak no melancholy;
Be rich in patience, if thou in goods be poor;
  Who livès merry he lives michtily;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Thou seest these wretches set with sorrow and care
  To gather goods in all their livès space;

And, when their bags are full, their selves are bare,
  And of their riches but the keeping hes; [*have*]
  While others come to spend it, that have grace,
Whilk of thy winnings no labour had nor cure; [*care*]
  Tak thou example, and spend with merriness;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

Though all the wealth that e'er had living wight
  Were only thine, no more thy part does fall
But meat, drink, clothes, and of the rest a sight,
  Yet, to the Judge, thou shalt give 'compt of all.
  Ane reckoning richt comes of ane ragment small, [*scroll*]
Be just and joyous, and do to nane injúre,
  And truth shall mak thee strong, as ony wall;
Without gladnéss availis no treasúre.

TO A LADY

Sweet rose of virtue and of gentleness,
Delightsome lily of every lustiness,
  Richest in bounty, and in beauty clear,
  And every virtue that is held most dear,
Except only that ye are merciless.

Into your garth this day I did pursue,[1]
There saw I flowers that freshé were of hue;
  Baith white and red most lusty to be seen,
  And wholesome herbs upon their stalkés green;
Yet leaf or flower find could I nane of rue.

I doubt that March with his cauld blastis keen,
Has slain this gentle herb, for whilk I mean; [*moan*]

[1]This day I wandered (or pursued my way) within your garden

Whose piteous death does to my heart sic pain
That I would mak to plant his root again,—
So comforting his leaves unto me been.

THE DANCE OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Of Februar the fifteenth nicht,
Full lang before the dayès licht,
I lay in-till a trance;
And then I saw baith Heaven and Hell;
Methocht, amang the fiendès fell,
Mahoun gan cry ane dance
Of sinners that were never shriven,
Against the feast of Fastern's even,
To mak their observánce.
He bad mak ready masquers' guise,
To cut up capers in the skies,
As varlets do in France.

. . . . . .

"Let see," quoth he, "now who begins,"
With that the foul Seven Deadly Sins
Began to leap at anis. [*at once*]
And first of all in dance was Pride,
With hair thrown back, and bonnet on side,
Like to mak vastie wanis; [*empty dwellings*]
And round about him, as a wheel,
Hangs all in rumples to the heel
His cassock for the nanis; [*for the nonce*]
Many a proud trompour with him tripped; [*cheat*]
Through scalding fire aye as they skipped
They girned with hideous granis. [*groans*]

Then Ire came in with sturt and strife: [*disturbance*]
His hand was aye upon his knife,

He brandished like a bear:
Boasters, braggers, and bargainérs,
After him passèd in in pairs,
All clad in garb of weir; [*war*]
In jacks, and mail, and bonnets of steel,
They were in armour to the heel,
Full froward was their air:
Some upon other with brands beft, [*beat*]
Some jaggit others to the heft,
With knives that sharp could shear.

Next in the dance followed Envy,
Filled full with feud and felony,
Hid malice and despite;
For privy hatred that traitor trembled;
Him followed many a rogue dissembled
With feignèd wordès white:
And flatterers untó men's faces;
And backbiters in secret places
To lie that had delight;
And whisperers of false lesíngs, [*lies*]
Alace! that courts of noble kings
Of them can never be quyte. [*quit*]

Next him in dance came Covetice,
Root of all ill, and ground of vice,
That never could be content:
Catiffs, wretches, and usurers,
Misers, hoarders, gatherers,
All with that warlook went:
Out of their throats they shot on other
Hot, molten gold, me thocht, a futher [*load*]
As fire-flaught maist fervent; [*lightning*]
Aye, as they emptied them of shot,
Fiends filled them new up to the throat,
With gold of all kind prent. [*of every impress*]

. . . . . .

Nae minstrels played to them nae doubt,
For gleemen there were holden out,
  By day and eke by nicht;
Except a minstrel that slew a man,
So to his heritage he wan,
  And enterèd by brief of richt.

Then cried Mahoun for a Hielan' Padyane: [*pageant*]
Syne ran a fiend to fetch Makfadyane,
  Far northwast in a nook:
When he the coronach had done shout,
Erse men so gatherèd him about, [*Scotch; Gaels*]
  In hell great room they took.

Thae termagents, with tag and tatter,
Full loud in Erse began to chatter, [*Scotch*]
  And roup like raven and rook. [*croak*]
The Devil sae deaved was with their yell,
That in the deepest pot of hell
  He smorit them with smoke! [*smothered*]

THE LAMENT FOR THE MAKERS

WHEN HE WAS SICK

I that in health was and gladnéss,
Am troubled now with great sicknéss,
And feeble with infirmity;
  Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Our pleasaunce here is all vain glory,
This false warld is but transitory,
The flesh is bruckle, the Fiend is slee; [*brittle*] [*sly*]
  Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The state of man does change and vary,
Now sound, now sick, now blithe, now sary, [*sorry*]
Now dancing merry, now like to dee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

No state on earth stands fast, I find;
As osiers light wave in the wind,
So waveth this warld's vanity;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Down unto death go all estates,
Prelates, and kings, and potentates,
Baith rich and poor of all degree;
Timor Mortis conturbat me

Death strikes the knichts upon the field,
Full armoured, under helm and shield,
Victor in every fight is he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

That strong, unmerciful tyránd [*tyrant*]
Taks, on the mother's breast sowkand, [*sucking*]
The babe full of benignity;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He taks the champion in the stour, [*storm, stir, or tumult*
The captain closèd in the tour, *of battle*]
The lady in bour full of beautie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He spares no lord for his puissánce,
No clerk for his intelligence;
His awful stroke may no man flee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Masters of magic and astrology,
Of rhetoric, logic, or theology,

Are helped by no conclusions slee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

In medecine the best practiciáns,
Of leeches, surgeons, and physiciáns,
Themselves from death may not supplie; [*defend*]
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

I see that Makers, amang the lave, [*among the rest*]
Play here their pageants, then go to grave;
Death does not spare their facultie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He came most piteously to devour
The noble Chaucer, of Makers' flower,
The Monk of Bury, and Gower, all three;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The gude Sir Hugh of Eglington,
And eke Heriot, and Wyntown,
He hath ta'en out of this countree;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He hath restrained (that scorpion dark)
Maister James Afflek and John Clerk,
Frae ballad-making and tragedy;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Holland and Barbour he has bereft;
Alas, he has not with us left
Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lea!
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Clerk of Tranent eke he has ta'en,
That made th' adventures of Gawain,
Sir Gilbert Hay ended has he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has blind Harry and Sandy Traill
Slain with his shot of mortal hail,
Which Patrick Johnstoun micht not flee;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has reft Merseir his endite, [*snatched;—manuscript*]
That did of luve so lively write,
So short, so quick, of sentence hie; [*high*]
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has ta'en Roull of Aberdeen,
And gentle Roull of Corstorphine;
Two better fellows did not man see;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

In Dumferline he has doun roun [*has run down*]
Gude Maister Robert Henrÿsoun;
Sir John the Ross embraced has he;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

And he has now ta'en, last of a',
Gude gentle Stobo and Quintin Schaw,
For whom all mortals feel pitie!
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Gude Maister Walter Kennedy
At point of death lies verilly,
Great ruth it is that this should be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Since he has all my brethren ta'en,
He will not let me live alane;
Perforce I must his next prey be;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Since then for death remeid is none, [*remedy*]
Best is that we for death dispone; [*dispose, prepare*]

After our death that live may we;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

OF LIFE

What is this life but a straight way to deid, [*death*]
Whilk has a time to pass and nane to dwell;
A sliding wheel us lent to seek remeid; [*remedy*]
A free choice given to Paradise or Hell;
A prey to death, whom vain is to repell;
A short torment for infinite gladnéss,
As short a joy for lasting heaviness.

Gawain Douglas

(About 1474–1522)

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER SUN

(From the *Prologue* to the *Æneid*, Bk. XII.)

Welcome, the lord of licht, and lamp of day,
Welcome, fost'rer of tender herbés green,
Welcome, quick'ner of blooming blossoms sheen,
Welcome, support of every root and vein,
Welcome, comfórt of all-kind fruit and grain,
Welcome, the birdés bield upon the brere, [*nest, shelter*
Welcome, maistér and ruler of the year, *briar*]
Welcome, welfare[1] of farmers at the ploughs,
Welcome, repairer of woods, trees, and boughs,
Welcome, depainter of the blooming meads,
Welcome, the life of everything that spredes,

[1]Welfare; i. e., the one who gives success to the farmer's labours, the source of his welfare.

Welcome, the strength of all-kind bestial,
Welcome be thy bricht beamés gladding all,
Welcome, celéstial mirror and aspy, [*sentinel*]
Arresting all that practise sluggardy.

NIGHT

(From the Translation of the *Æneid*)

The nicht came on, and every weary wicht [*wight*]
Through out the earth has straightway caught a-richt
The sound and pleasant sleep he likéd best:
The woods and raging waters were at rest;
And the bricht stars their mid-course rollèd doun;
The fields are still, there is no noise nor soun; [*sound*]
And beasts and birds which divers colours bear,
And whatsoever in the braid lochs were,
Or all that dwell 'neath the rough copse's spray,
Through the nicht's silence slept there where they lay,
Losing their busy thoughts and carés smart,
All irksome toil forgot and out of heart.
But the doomed, restless spirit did not so
Of this Phœnician Queen, hapless Dido;
For never mair may Dido sleep a wink,
Nor nichtis rest in een or breast let sink:
The heavy thoughts still multiply amain;
Strong luve begins to rage and rise again,
And felon storms of ire gan her to shake;
Thus finally she starteth out, alaik!
Revolving many thingés in her thought.

Sir David Lyndsay

(1490–1555)

THE PROLOGUE

(From *The Dream*, 1528)

Into the Kalendès of Januarie,
  When Phoebus fresh, by moving circulair,
From Capricorn, was entered in Aquarie,
  With blastès that the branches made full bare,
  The snaw, the sleet, perturbèd all the air,
And flemit Flora fra every bank and bus, [*banished*; *bush*]
Through support of the austere Æolus:

After that I the lang winteris nicht [*winter's night*]
  Had lain a-waking in my bed alone,
Through heavy thought, that na way sleep I micht,
  Remembering of divers thingès gone:
  So, up I rose, and clothèd me anon;
By this, fair Titan, with his lemis licht, [*gleams, flames*]
O'er all the land had spread his banners bricht.

With cloak and hood I dressèd me belive, [*quickly*]
  With double shoon, and mittens on my hands,
Howbeit the air was richt penétrative,
  Yet, forth I fared, leaping across the lands,
  Towards the sea, to sport me on the sands,
Because unbloomit was baith bank and brae; [*without bloom*]
And so, as I was passing on the way,

I met dame Flora, in dole weed disguisèd, [*mourning garments*]
  Who, when 'twas May, was dulce and délectable, [*sweet*]

With stalwart storms her sweetness was surprisèd,
Her heavenly hues were turnèd into sable,
Whilk sometime were to luvers amicable;
Fled from the frost, the tender flowers I saw,
Under dame Nature's mantle lurking law. [*low*]

The little birds in flocks then saw I fle, [*fly*]
And mak to Nature lamentatióun,
They lighted doun beside me on a tree,
Of their complaint I had compassióun,
And, with a piteous exclamatioun,
They said: *Blessed be Summer with his flowers;*
And cursèd be thou, Winter, with thy showers.

Alas! Aurora, the silly lark gan cry,
Where hast thou left thy balmy liquor sweet,
That us rejoicèd, mounting in the sky?
Thy silver drops are turnèd into sleet:
O fair Phoebūs! where is thy wholesome heat?
Why suff'rest thou thy heavenly pleasant face
With misty vapours to be obscured, allace! [*alas*]

Where art thou May, with June thy sister sheen, [*shining*]
Well borderèd with daisies of delight?
And gentle Jūly, with thy mantle green,
Enamellèd with roses, red and white?
Now auld and cauld Janúar, in dispyte,
Reaveth from us all pastime and pleasúre;
Alas! what gentle heart may this endure?
Obscurèd are with cloudès odious
The golden skyès of the Orient.
Changing in sorrow our sang melodious,
Whilk we had wont to sing with gude intent,
Resounding to the heaven's firmament:
But now our day is changèd into nicht:
With that they rose, and flew out of my sicht.

Pensive in heart, passing full soberlie,
  Unto the sea forward I fared anone, [*at once*]
The tide was out, the sand was smooth and drye,
  Then up and doun I mused, myself alone,
  Till that I spied a little cave of stone,
High in a crag, upward I did approach
Without delay, and climbed up in the roche: [*rock*]

And purposèd for passing of the time,
  Me to defend from ociositie, [*idleness*]
With pen and paper to register in rime,
  Some merry matter of antiquitie;
  But idleness, ground of iniquitie,
She made so dull my spirits me within,
That I wist not at what end to begin;

But sat still in that cave, where I micht see
  The weltering of the wavès up and doun,
And this false worldès instabilitie
  Unto that sea micht mak comparisóun,
  And of this worldès variatióun,
To those that fix upon it their intent,
Considering who have most, should most repent.

So with my hood my head I happit warm, [*wrapped*]
  And in my cloak I folded baith my feet;
I thought my corpse with cauld should tak no harm, [*body*]
  My mittens held my handès well in heat;
  The shelt'ring crag me covered from the sleet;
There still I sat, my bonès for to rest,
Till Morpheus with sleep my sprite opprest.

So through the boisterous blasts of Æolus,
  And through my walking on the nicht before,
And through the seás moving marvelous.
  By Neptunus, with mony rout and roar,

Constrained I was to sleep withouten more;
And what I dreamèd in conclusióun
I shall you tell, a marvellous visióun.

AN APOLOGY FOR WRITING IN THE VULGAR AND MATERNAL LANGUAGE

(From *The Monarchy*, 1553)

Gentle redár, have at me na despite,
Thinking that I presumptuously pretend,
In vulgar tongue sa high mattere to write:
But, where I miss, I pray thee to amend,
By the unlearned I would the cause were kend,
Of our maist miserable travail and torment,
And how in earth na place is permanent.

Howbeit that divers devoted cunning clerks, [*learned*
In Latin tongue have written sundry books: *writers*]
Our unlearnèd know little of their werks;
Mair than they do the raving of the rooks:
Wherefore to colliers, carters, and to cooks,
To Jock and Tom, my rime shall be directet,
By cunning men howbeit it will be lacket. [*dispraised*]

Though every common may not be a clerk,
And have no lore except their tongue maternal,
Why should of God the marvellous heavenly werk
Be hid from them, I think it not fraternal:
The Father of heaven, who was and is eternal,
To Moses gave the law on Mount Sináy
Neither in Greek nor Latin, as I hear say.

He writ the law in tables hard of stone,
In their ain vulgar language of Hebréw;

That all the bairns of Israel, every one,
Micht know the law, and so the same ensue.
But had he writ in Latin or in Grew, [*Greek*]
It had to them been but a savourless jest,
Ye may well wist God wrought all for the best.

Aristotell, nor Plato, I hear sane, [*said*]
Writ not their high philosophie natúral,
In Danish, Dutch, nor tongue Italián,
But in the maist ornate tongue máternal,
Whose fame and name do ring perpetual;
Famous Virgíll, the prince of poetrie,
Nor Cicero, the flower of oratrie,

Writ not in Caldie language, nor in Grew;
Nor yet writ in the language Saracene;
Nor in the natural language of Hebrew; [*original*]
But in the Roman tongue, as may be seen,
Whilk was their proper language, as I ween,
When Romans ranked domínators, indeed,
The ornate Latin was their proper leid. [*language*]

. . . . . .

The prophet David, King of Israel,
Compiled the pleasant psalms of the Psaltair
In his ain proper tongue, as I hear tell,
And Solomon, who was his son and heir,
Did mak his buke intill the tongue vulgair,
Why should not their saying be to us shown
In our langúage, I would the cause were known.

Let doctors write their curious questióuns,
And arguments, sown full of sophistrie;
Their logic, and their high opinióuns,
And their dark judgments of astronomie,
Their medicine, and their philosophie;

Let poets show their glorious ingyne, [*genius*]
As ever they please, in Greek, or in Latine:

But let us have the bookés necessare
To commonweal and our salvatióun,
Justly translated in our tongue vulgaire:
And so I mak the supplicatióun,
O gentle redar, have na indignatióun,
Thinking I meddle with so high mattair:
Now to my purpose forward will I fare.

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

(From *The Monarchy*)

Then shall a fire, as clerkés sayen,
Mak all the hiils and valleys plane, [*smooth, level*]
From earth up to the heaven empyre, [*empyrean*]
All be renewèd by that fire,
Purging all things materiall,
Under the heaven imperiall:
Baith earth and water, fire and air,
Shall be mair perfect made and fair,
That which before had mixèd been,
Shall there be purified and clean,
The earth like crystal shall be clear,
And every planet in his sphere
Shall rest, withouten mair movíng,
Baith starry heaven and chrystalling: [*crystalline*]
The first and highest heaven movábill,
Shall stand, not turning, firm and stable.
The sun into the orient
Shall stand, and in the occident
Rest shall the moon, and be mair clear
Than now is Phoebus in his sphere.

Also that lantern of the heaven
Shall give mair licht by degrees seven,
Than it gave since the world began.
The heaven renewèd shall be than. [*then*]
Likewise the earth, with such device,
Shall match with heavenly paradise.
So heaven and earth shall be all one,
As meaneth the apostle John.
The great sea shall na mair appear,
But like the crystal pure and clear.
Passing imaginatióun
Of man to mak narratióun
Of glory God hath done prepare
For every one which cometh there,
The whilk with earès, nor with een
Of man, may not be heard; nor seen;
With heart it is unthinkable,
And with tongue unpronounceable;
Whose pleasures shall be so perfite,
Having in God so great delight,
The space now of a thousand year
That time shall not an hour appear,
Whilk cannot comprehended be
Till we that pleasant sicht shall see.

. . . . . .

The mair men looke on Phoebus bricht,
The mair feeblé shall be their sicht,
Just so let na men set their cure, [*care*]
To search the high divine natúre.

. . . . . .

But after this great judgément
All things to us shall be patént.
Let us with Paul our mind address,
For he was full of heavenliness,

Full humily he teachèd us [*humbly*]
Not for to be too curious.

. . . . . .

Sufficient us for to implore
Great God to bring us to His glore. [*glory*]

THE DESIRE FOR REST

(From *The Monarchy*)

And furthermore, all dead things corporal
Under the concave of the heaven empyre [*empyrean*]
That now to labour subject are and thrall,
Sun, moon, and stars, earth, water, air, and fire,
In ane manére they have ane hot desire,
Wishing that day, that they may be at rest,
As Erasmus exponeth manifest.

We see the great globe of the firmament
Continually in moving marvellous;
The seven planets contrary their intent,
Are reft about with course contrarious;
The wind and sea, with stormès furious;
The troubled air, with frosts, and snaw, and rain,
Unto that day they travel ever in pain.

And all the angels of the orders nine,
Having compassion of our miseries,
They long after that day, and toward that fine, [*end*]
To see us freed from our infirmities,
And cleansèd from these great calamities
And troublous life, whilk never shall have end
Until that day, I mak it to thee kend. [*known*]

James Wedderburn

(About 1500–1564-5)

LEAVE ME NOT

(Psalm XXVII, 9.)

Ah! my Lord, leave me not,
Leave me not, leave me not,
Ah! my Lord, leave me not,
    Thus mine alone:
With ane burden on my back
I may not bear, I am so weak,
Lord, this burden from me tak,
    Or else I am gone.

With sins I am laden sair, [*sore*]
Leave me not, leave me not,
With sins I am laden sair,
    Leave me not alone:
I pray thee, Lord, therefore,
Keep not my sins in store;
Loose me, or I am forlore, [*lost*]
    And hear thou my moan.

With Thy hands Thou hast me wrought,
Leave me not, leave me not,
With Thy hands Thou hast me wrought,
    Leave me not alone:
I was sold and Thou me bought,
With Thy blood Thou hast me coft; [*purchased*]
Now am I hither sought
    To Thee, Lord, alone.

I cry and call to Thee,
To leave me not, to leave me not,
I cry and call to Thee,
To leave me not alone:
All they that laden be,
Thou bidst them come to Thee,
Then shall they savèd be,
Through Thy mercy alone.

Thou savest all the penitent,
And leav'st them not, and leav'st them not·
Thou savest all the penitent,
And leav'st them not alone.
All that will their sins repent,
Nonè of them shall be shent, [*shamed*]
Suppose Thy bow be ready bent,
Of them Thou killest none.

Faith, hope, and charity,
Leave me not, leave me not,
Faith, hope, and charity,
Leave me not alone.
I pray Thee, Lord, grant me,
These godly giftès three,
Then shall I savèd be,
Doubt have I none.

To the Father be all glore, [*glory*]
That leaves us not, that leaves us not,
To the Father be all glore,
That leaves us not alone.
Son and Holy Ghost e'ermore,
As it is and was before;
Through Christ our Saviour
We are safe every one.

Alexander Scott

(1525?–1584)

THE LAMENT OF THE MASTER OF ERSKINE

(1550?)

Depart, depart, depart,
Alas! I must depart
From her that has my heart,
With heart full sore,
Against my will indeed,
And can find no remeid, [*remedy*]
I wot the pains of deid [*death*]
Can do no more.

Now must I go, allace! [*alas*]
From sicht of her sweet face,
The ground of all my grace,
And soverane:
What chance that may fall me
Shall I ne'er merry be,
Until the time I see
My sweet again.

I go, and wot not where,
I wander here and there,
I weep and sigh richt sair,
With painės smart:

Now must I pass away
Through wild and wandering way:
Alas! this woeful day
That we must part.

Adieu, my own sweet thing,
My joy and comforting,
My mirth and solacing
For earthly glore: [*glory*]

Fare well, my lady bricht,
And my remembrance richt.
Farewell, and have good nicht;
I say no more.

PARAPHRASE OF THE FIFTIETH PSALM [1]

Lord God deliver me, allace! [*alas*]
For thy great mercy, ruth and grace,
Sore mourning, grovelling on my face, [*sorely*]
Rue on my misery:
O for the multitude and space
Of thy high clemence, hear my case, [*clemency*]
And my trespáss expell and chase:
Lord God deliver me.

Wash me, and mak my soul serene
From all iniquity that bene;
Cleanse me of crime and mak me clean,
All vicés for to flee.
For my transgressions have I seen,
Whilk tortures me with tray and tene, [*trouble, sorrow*]
And aye my sin before mine een;
Lord God deliver me.

. . . . . .

Create, and firm within me found
A heart immaculate and sound,

[1] Fiftieth in the Vulgate-version; fifty-first in the English Bible.

A steadfast heart renew and ground [*establish*]
Within my breast to be.
Fleme me not frae thy face fecound, [*drive*] [*fertile*]
But let thy Holy Sprite abound;
Lord God deliver me.

IV. BALLADS OF UNCERTAIN DATE

THOMAS THE RHYMER

True Thomas lay on Huntley bank;
A ferlie spied he wi' his ee; [*a sudden wonder*]
There he saw a lady bright
Come riding doun by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fine;
At ilka tett o' her horse's mane, [*knot, plait*]
Hung fifty sillar bells and nine.

True Thomas he pu'd aff his cap,
And louted low doun on his knee:
'Hail to thee, Mary, Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth could never be.'

'O no, O no, Thomas,' she said,
'That name does not belong to me;
I'm but the Queen o' fair Elfland
That hither have come to visit thee.

'Harp and carp, Thomas,' she said; [*play and sing*]
'Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your body I shall be.'

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunten me.' [*fate*]
Syne he has kiss'd her on the lips, [*after that*]
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

'Now ye maun go wi' me,' she said,
'Now, Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Through weal or woe as may chance to be.'

She's mounted on her milk-white steed,
And she's ta'en Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rang,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

'Now, Thomas, light doun, light doun,' she said,
'And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide ye there a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

'O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi' thorns and briars?
That is the Path of Righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

'And see ye not yon braid, braid road,
That lies across the lily leven? [*lawn*]
That is the Path of Wickedness,
Though some call it the road to Heaven.

'And see ye not yon bonny road
That winds about the ferny brae?

That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

'But, Thomas, ye sall haud your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For speak ye word in Elfin-land,
Ye'll ne'er win back to your ain countrie.'

O they rade on, and further on,
And they waded rivers abune the knee;
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of a sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, there was nae starlight,
They waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on the earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree:
'Take this for thy wages, Thomas,' she said,
'It will give thee the tongue that can never lee.'

'My tongue is my ain,' then Thomas he said;
'A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy or sell [*could*]
At fair or tryst where I might be.

'I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye!'—
'Now haud thy peace, Thomas,' she said,
'For as I say, so must it be.'

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair o' shoon of the velvet green;
And till seven years were come and gane,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THE TWA CORBIES

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane: [*ravens*] [*moan*]
The tane unto the tither did say,
'Whar sall we gang and dine the day?'

'In behint yon auld fail dyke, [*turf, sod*]
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en anither mate,
Sae we may mak' our dinner sweet.

'Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane, [*neck-bone*]
And I'll pike out his bonny blue e'en;
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare. [*thatch*]

'Mony's the one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken whar he is gane.
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

THE GREEN-WOOD

(From *Robin Hood and the Monk*)

In summer, when the shaws be sheen, [*woods, groves*]
And leaves be large and long,
It is full merry in fair forést
To hear the fowlés song:

To see the deer draw to the dale,
And leave the hillés hee,
And shadow them in the leavés green,
Under the green-wood tree.

V. POEMS, SONGS AND CAROLS OF THE EARLY TUDOR PERIOD

THE NUT-BROWN MAID

(About 1500)

HE. Be it right or wrong, these men among
On women do complain;
Affirming this, how that it is
A labour spent in vain
To love them wele; for never a dele
They love a man again:
For let a man do what he can
Their favour to attain,
Yet if a new to them pursue,
Their first true lover than [*then*]
Laboureth for naught; for from her thought
He is a banished man.

SHE. I say not nay, but that all day
It is both written and said
That woman's faith is, as who saith,
All utterly decayed:
But nevertheless, right good witnéss
In this case might be laid
That they love true and continúe:
Record the Nut-brown Maid,
Which, when her love came her to prove,

To her to make his moan,
Would not depart; for in her heart
She loved but him alone.

HE. Then between us let us discuss
What was all the manere
Between them two: we will also
Tell all the pain in fere [*in company together*]
That she was in. Now I begin,
So that ye me answere:
Wherefore all ye that present be,
I pray you give an ear.
I am the Knight. I come by night,
As secret as I can,
Saying, Alas! thus standeth the case,
I am a banished man.

SHE And I your will for to fulfil
In this will not refuse;
Trusting to show, in wordes few,
That men have an ill use—
To their own shame—women to blame,
And causeless them accuse.
Therefore to you I answer now,
All women to excuse—
Mine own heart dear, with you what cheer?
I pray you, tell anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. It standeth so: a deed is do
Whereof great harm shall grow:
My destiny is for to die
A shameful death, I trow;
Or else to flee. The t' one must be.
None other way I know

But to withdraw as an outláw,
And take me to my bow.
Wherefore adieu, mine own heart true!
None other rede I can: [*counsel, I know*]
For I must to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. O Lord, what is this worldis bliss,
That changeth as the moon!
My summer's day in lusty May
Is darked before the noon.
I hear you say, farewell: Nay, nay,
We départ not so soon.
Why say ye so? Whither will ye go?
Alas! what have ye done?
All my welfáre to sorrow and care
Should change, if ye were gone:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. I can believe it shall you grieve,
And somewhat you distrain;
But afterward, your painés hard
Within a day or twain
Shall soon aslake; and ye shall take
Comfort to you again.
Why should ye ought? for, to make thought,
Your labour were in vain.
And thus I do; and pray you to,
As heartily as I can:
For I must to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Now, sith that ye have showed to me
The secret of your mind,
I shall be plain to you again,

Like as ye shall me find.
Sith it is so that ye will go,
I will not live behind.
Shall never be said the Nut-brown Maid
Was to her love unkind.
Make you ready, for so am I,
Although it were anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. Yet I you rede to make good heed
What men will think and say:
Of young, of old, it shall be told
That ye be gone away
Your wanton will for to fulfil,
In green-wood you to play;
And that ye might for your delight
No longer make delay.
Rather than ye should thus for me
Be called an ill woman
Yet would I to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Though it be sung of old and young
That I should be to blame,
Theirs be the charge that speak so large
In hurting of my name:
For I will prove that faithful love
It is devoid of shame:
In your distress and heaviness
To part with you the same;
And sure all tho that do not so [*those*]
True lovers are they none:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. I counsel you, Remember how
It is no maiden's law
Nothing to doubt, but to run out
To wood with an outláw.
For ye must there in your hand bear
A bow ready to draw;
And as a thief thus must you live
Ever in dread and awe;
Whereby to you great harm might grow:
Yet had I liever than
That I had to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. I think not nay but as ye say;
It is no maiden's lore;
But love may make me for your sake,
As I have said before,
To come on foot, to hunt and shoot,
To get us meat and store;
For so that I your company
May have, I ask no more.
From which to part it maketh my heart
As cold as any stone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. For an outláw this is the law,
That men him take and bind:
Without pitie, hangéd to be,
And waver with the wind.
If I had need (as God forbede!)
What socours could ye find?
Forsooth I trow, you and your bow
For fear would draw behind.
And no mervail; for little avail

Were in your counsel than:
Wherefore I'll to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Right well know ye that women be
But feeble for to fight;
No womanhede it is, indeed,
To be bold as a knight:
Yet in such fear if that ye were
With enemies day and night,
I would withstand, with bow in hand,
To grieve them as I might,
And you to save; as women have
From death men many one:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. Yet take good hede; for ever I drede
That ye could not sustain
The thorny ways, the deep valléys,
The snow, the frost, the rain,
The cold, the heat; for dry or wete,
We must lodge on the plain;
And, us above, no other roof
But a brake bush or twain:
Which soon should grieve you, I believe;
And ye would gladly than
That I had to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Sith I have here been partynere
With you of joy and bliss,
I must alsó part of your woe
Endure, as reason is:
Yet I am sure of one pleasúre,
And shortly it is this—

That where ye be, me seemeth, pardé,
I could not fare amiss.
Without more speech I you beseech
That we were shortly gone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

He. If ye go thyder, ye must consider, [*thither*]
When ye have lust to dine,
There shall no meat be for to gete,
Neither beer, ale, nor wine,
No sheetes clean, to lie between,
Made of thread and twine;
None other house, but leaves and boughs,
To cover your head and mine.
Lo, mine heart sweet, this ill diéte
Should make you pale and wan:
Wherefore I'll to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

She. Among the wild deer such an archére
As men say that ye be,
Ne may not fail of such vitayle
Where is so great plenté:
And water clear of the rivere
Shall be full sweet to me;
With which in hele I shall right wele [*health*]
Endure, as ye shall see;
And, or we go, a bed or two
I can provide anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

He. Lo yet, before, ye must do more,
If ye will go with me:
As, cut your hair up by your ear,

Your kirtle by the knee;
With bow in hand for to withstand
Your enemies, if need be:
And this same night, before daylight,
To woodward will I flee.
If that ye will all this fulfil,
Do it shortly as ye can:
Else will I to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. I shall as now do more for you
Than 'longeth to womanhede; [*belongeth*]
To short my hair, a bow to bear,
To shoot in time of need.
O my sweet mother! before all other
For you I have most drede!
But now, adieu! I must ensue
Where fortune doth me lead.
All this make ye: Now let us flee;
The day cometh fast upon:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. Nay, nay, not so; ye shall not go,
And I shall tell you why—
Your appetite is to be light
Of love, I well espy:
For, right as ye have said to me,
In likewise hardily
Ye would answere whosoever it were,
In way of company:
It is said of old, Soon hot, soon cold;
And so is a womán:
Wherefore I to the wood will go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. If ye take heed, it is no need
Such words to say to me;
For oft ye prayed, and long assayed,
Or I loved you, pardé:
And though that I of ancestry
A baron's daughter be,
Yet have you proved how I you loved,
A squire of low degree;
And ever shall, whatso befall,
To die therefore anone;
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. A baron's child to be beguiled,
It were a cursèd deed!
To be feláw with an outlaw—
Almighty God forbede!
Yet better were the poor squyere
Alone to forest yede [*went*]
Than ye shall say another day
That by my cursèd rede
Ye were betrayed. Wherefore, good maid,
The best rede that I can,
Is, that I to the green-wood go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Whatever befall, I never shall
Of this thing be upbraid:
But if ye go, and leave me so,
Then have ye me betrayed.
Remember you wele, how that ye dele;
For if ye, as ye said,
Be so unkind to leave behind
Your love, the Nut-brown Maid,
Trust me truly that I shall die
Soon after ye be gone:

For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. If that ye went, ye should repent;
For in the forest now
I have purveyed me of a maid
Whom I love more than you:
Another more fair than ever ye were
I dare it well avow;
And of you both each would be wroth
With other, as I trow:
It were mine ease to live in peace;
So will I, if I can:
Wherefore I to the wood will go,
Alone, a banished man.

SHE. Though in the wood I understood
Ye had a paramour,
All this may nought remove my thought,
But that I will be your':
And she shall find me soft and kind
And courteous every hour;
Glad to fulfil all that she will
Command me, to my power:
For-had ye, lo, an hundred mo,
Yet would I be that one:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. Mine own dear love, I see the prove [*proof*]
That ye be kind and true;
Of maid, of wife, in all my life
The best that ever I knew;
Be merry and glad; be no more sad;
The case is changéd new;
For it were ruth that for your truth

Ye should have cause to rue.
Be not dismayed, whatsoever I said
To you when I began:
I will not to the green-wood go;
I am no banished man.

SHE. These tidings be more glad to me
Than to be made a queen,
If I were sure they should endure;
But it is often seen
When men will break promise they speak
The wordis on the splene.
Ye shape some wile me to beguile,
And steal from me, I ween:
Then were the case worse than it was,
And I more woe-begone:
For, in my mind, of all mankind
I love but you alone.

HE. Ye shall not need further to drede:
I will not disparáge
You (God defend), sith you descend
Of so great a linage.
Now understand: to Westmoreland,
Which is my heritage,
I will you bring; and with a ring,
By way of marriage
I will you take, and lady make,
As shortly as I can:
Thus have you won an Earlès son,
And not a banished man.

Here may ye see that women be
In love meek, kind, and stable;
Let never man reprove them than,
Or call them variable;

But rather pray God that we may
To them be comfortable;
Which sometime proveth such as He loveth,
If they be charitable.
For sith men would that women should
Be meek to them each one;
Much more ought they to God obey,
And serve but Him alone.

A LYKE-WAKE DIRGE

This ae night, this ae night.
Every night and all,
Fire, and sleet, and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
Every night and all,
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every night and all,
Sit thee down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If hosen and shoon thou gavest nane,
Every night and all,
The Whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bane,
And Christ receive thy saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst pass,
Every night and all,
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.

. . . . . .

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst pass,
Every night and all,
To Purgatory Fire thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every night and all,
The fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy saule.

If meat or drink thou gavest nane,
Every night and all,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane,
And Christ receive thy saule.

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and all,
Fire, and sleet, and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY

(From *God's Appeal to Man.* About 1420)

In sickness and in povertie,
Be glad therein, thank Me for all,
The more thou hast them in plentie,
The nearer I shall come withal.
Then say: "Lord, keep me nigh to Thee!
At need, Lord, hear me when I call!
Take from me health, prosperitie,
Rather than let me from Thee fall."

"QUID EST HOMO, QUIA MAGNIFICAS EUM?"

(About 1420)

What is man, wot well I wolde, [*would*]
  That magnifies himself alway,
What but a mark, made in the mould,
  But a clinging clot of clay?
Thou shapest us for that we sholde [*should*]
  Have been in bliss for ever and aye:
But now, alas, both young and old
  Forgetten it, both night and day.
Ah! good Lord, what shall I say,
  I that stand in this degree?
I wot no thing that help me may
  But *parce mihi, Domine.*

CAROL

Make we merry in hall and bour.
This time was born our Saviour.

In this timė God hath sent
His own Son, to be presént,
To dwell with us in verament,
  God that is our Saviour.

In this time that is befall,
A child was born in an ox stall,
And after, He diėd for us all,
  God that is our Saviour.

In this time an angel bright
Met three shepherds on a night,
He bade them go full quickly, right
  God that is our Saviour.

In this timė now pray we
To Him that died for us on tree,
Upon us all to have pitee,
God that is our Saviour.

CAROL

Make we merry both more and less,
For now is the time of Christmas.

Let no man come in to this hall,
Groom, nor page nor yet marshál—
But that some sport he bring withal,
For now is the time of Christmas.

If that he say he cannot sing,
Some other sport then let him bring,
That it may please at this feastíng,
For now is the time of Christmas.

If he say he can naught do,
Then for my love ask him no mo,
But to the stocks then let him go,
For now is the time of Christmas.

CAROL

What cheer? Good cheer, good cheer, good cheer!
Be merry and glad this good new year!

"Lift up your hearts and be ye glad
In Christès birth," the angel bade;
Say each to other, if any be sad:
What cheer?

Now heaven's King His birth hath take
Joy and mirth we ought to make,
Say each to other for His sake:
What cheer?

I tell you all with heart so free:
Right welcome be ye all to me;
Be glad and merry for charitie!
What cheer?

. . . . . .

THE JOLLY SHEPHERD

Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
He had on him his tabard and hat, [*rough cloak*]
His tar-box, his pipe, and his flagat; [*bottle*]
His name was callèd jolly, jolly Wat;
For he was a good herdès boy,
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy,
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

The shepherd upon a hill was laid,
Unto his girdle his dog was tayed; [*tied*]
He had not slept but a little brayd, [*space, time*]
But "Gloria in excelsis" was to him said.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

The shepherd on a hill he stode,
Round about him his sheep they yode; [*went, strayed*]
He put his hand under his hode, [*hood*]
He saw a star as red as blode:
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy,
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

"Now farewell Mall, and also Will,
For my love go ye all still
Unto I come again you till,
And evermore, Will, ring thy bell."
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy,
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

"Now must I go where Christ was born;
Farewell, I come again at morn.
Dog, keep my sheep well fro the corn,
And warn well, Warrock, when I blow my horn."
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy?

FILL THE CUP, PHILIP

(About 1500)

Fill the cup, Philip,
And let us drink a dram!
Once or twice about the house,
And leave where we began.

I drink to you, sweetheart,
So much as here is in,
Desiring you to follow me,
And do as I begin.

And if you will not pledge,
You shall bear the blame;
I drink to you with all my heart,
If you will pledge me the same.

MAKE ROOM, SIRS

(About 1500)

Make room, sirs, and let us be merry,
With "Huffa, galand!"
Sing, "Tyrll on the berry,"
And let the wide world wind!
Sing, "Friska jolly,"
With "Hey, trolly lolly,"
For I see well it is but folly
For to have a sad mind!

THE HUNT IS UP

(In the Time of Henry VIII.)

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
And it is well nigh day:
And Harry our King, is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

The east is bright with morning light,
And darkness it is fled,

And the merry horn wakes up the morn
To leave his idle bed.

. . . . . .

The horses snort to be at the sport,
The dogs are running free,
The woods rejoice at the merry noise
Of hey tantara tee ree!

The sun is glad to see us clad
All in our lusty green,
And smiles in the sky as he riseth high,
To see and to be seen.

Awake, all men, I say again,
Be merry as you may,
For Harry our King is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

MY HEART IS HIGH ABOVE

(16th Century)

My heart is high above, my body is full of bliss,
For I am set in luve as well as I would wiss;
I luve my lady pure and she luves me again,
I am her serviture, she is my soverane;
She is my very heart, I am her hope and heill,
She is my joy inwárd, I am her luvar leal;
I am her bond and thrall; she is at my command;
I am perpetual her man, both foot and hand;
The thing that may her please my body shall fulfil;
Whatever her disease, it does my body ill.
My bird, my bonny ane, my tender babe venust, [*delightful*]
My luve, my life alane, my liking and my lust!

. . . . . .

Luvers in pain, I pray God send you sic remeid
As I have nicht and day, you to defend from deid
Therefore be ever true unto your ladies free,
And they will on you rue as mine has done on me.

DEATH

O Death, rock me to sleep,
Bring me to quiet rest,
Let pass my weary guiltless ghost
Out of my careful breast.
Toll on the passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
For I must die,
There is no remedy.

My pains who can express?
Alas, they are so strong;
My dolours will not suffer strength
My life for to prolong.
Toll on the passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
For I must die,
There is no remedy.

Alone in prison strong
I wail my destiny.
Woe worth this cruel hap that I
Must taste this misery.
Toll on the passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
For I must die,
There is no remedy.

Farewell, my pleasures past,
Welcome my present pain.
I feel my torment so increase
That life cannot remain.
Toll on the passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell;
Thy sound my death abroad will tell,
For I must die,
There is no remedy.

Cease now the passing bell;
Ring out my doleful knell.
For thou my death dost tell
Lord pity thou my soul.
Death doth draw nigh.
Sound dolefully;
For now I die,
I die, I die.

William Cornish

(d. 1524?)

GOD'S CARE FOR MAN

Pleasure it is
To hear, iwis, [*certainly, truly*]
The birdès sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing;
God's purveyance
For sustenance
It is for man.
Then we always

To Him give praise,
And thank Him than, [*then*]
And thank Him than.

John Skelton

(1460?–1529)

A DIRGE FOR PHILIP SPARROW

Pla ce bo,
Who is there, who?
Di le xi,
Dame Marjery;
Fa re my my,
Wherefore and why, why?
For the soul of Philip Sparrow
That was late slain at Carow,
Among the nunnės blake, [*black nuns*]
For that sweet soul's sake,
And for all sparrows' souls
Set in our bead roules,
Pater noster qui
With an Ave Maria,
And with the corner of a creed
The more shall be your meed.

When I remember again
How my Philip was slain,
Never half the pain
Was between you twain,
Pyramus and Thisbe,
As then befell to me;
I wept and I wailed,
The tears down hailed,

But nothing it availed
To call Philip again
Whom Gib our cat hath slain.

Gib, I say, our cat,
Worrowed her on that; [*choked*]
Which I lovèd best
It cannot be expressed;
My sorrowful heaviness
But all without redress,
For within that stound, [*moment*]
Half slumbering in a swounde, [*swoon*]
I fell down to the ground.

Scarcely I cast mine eyes
Toward the cloudy skies,
But when I did behold
My Sparrow dead and cold,
No creature but that wold [*would*]
Have pitied upon me
To behold and see
What heaviness did me pange [*oppress*]
Wherewith my hands I wrange,
That my sinews cracked
As though I had been racked,
So painèd and so strained,
That no life well remained.

I sighèd, and I sobbed,
For that I was robbed
Of my Sparrow's life;
O maiden, widow, and wife,
Of what estate ye be
Of high or low degree,
Great sorrow then ye might see,
And learn to weep at me;

Such pains did me freat [*damage*]
That mine heart did beat,
My visage pale and dead,
Wan, and blue as lead,
The pangs of hateful death
Well-nigh stopped my breath.
Heu, heu, me,
That I am woe for thee!
Ad dominum cum tribularer clamavi,
Of God nothing else crave I.
. . . . . .

From COLIN CLOUT

And if ye stand in doubt
Who brought this rime about,
My name is Colin Clout.
I purpose to shake out
All my cunning bag,
Like a clerkly hag;
For though my rime be ragged,
Tatterèd and jagged,
Rudely rain beaten,
Rusty and moth eaten,
If ye talk well therewith
It hath in it some pith.
For as far as I can see,
It is wrong with each degree;
For the temporalty
Accuseth the spiritualty;
The spiritual again
Doth grudge and complain
Upon tempóral men;
Thus each of other blother, [*chatter*]
The one against the other:

Alas they make me shudder!
For in hugger mugger
The church is put at fault;
The prelates be so haut [*proud*]
They say, and look so high,
As though they would fly
Above the starry sky.

Laymen say indeed
How they take no heed
Their silly sheep to feed,
But pluck away and pull
The fleeces of their wool;
Unnethes they leave a lock [*scarcely*]
Of wool among their flock.
And as for their cunning
A glumming and a mumming,
And make thereof a jape, [*jest*]
They gaspè and they gape
All to have promotion;
There is their whole devotion,
With money, if it will hap [*chance*]
To catch the forkèd cap,
Forsooth they are too lewd [*ignorant*]
To say so all be shrewd.

TO MISTRESS MARGARET HUSSEY

Merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon,
Or hawk of the tower;
With solace and gladness
Much mirth and no madness
All good and no badness;

So joyously,
So maidenly,
So womanly,
Her demeaning,
In everything,
Far, far passing,
That I can indite,
Or suffice to write,
Of merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.
As patient and as still,
And as full of good-will,
As fair Isaphil,
Coliander,
Sweet Pomander,
Good Cassander;
Steadfast of thought,
Well made, well wrought,
Far may be sought,
Ere ye can find
So courteous, so kind,
As merry Margaret,
This midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon,
Or hawk of the tower.

PART FOURTH

WYATT AND SURREY TO SPENSER

(About 1509–1579)

Sir Thomas Wyatt

(1503–1542)

THE LOVER'S LIFE COMPARED TO THE ALPS

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Like unto these unmeasurable mountains
So is my painful life, the burden of ire;
For high be they, and high is my desire;
And I of tears, and they be full of fountains:
Under craggy rocks they have barren plains;
Hard thoughts in me my woful mind doth tire:
Small fruit and many leaves their tops do attire:
With small effect great trust in me remains:
The boisterous winds oft their high boughs do blast;
Hot sighs in me continually be shed:
Wild beasts in them, fierce love in me is fed;
Unmovable am I, and they steadfast.
Of singing birds they have the tune and note;
And I always plaints passing through my throat.

FORGET NOT YET

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant;
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet!
Forget not yet when first began
The weary life ye know since whan
The suit, the service none tell can;
Forget not yet!
Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways
The painful patience in delays,
Forget not yet!
Forget not! oh! forget not this,
How long ago hath been, and is
The mind that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet!
Forget not then thine own approv'd,
The which so long hath thee so lov'd,
Whose steadfast faith yet never mov'd:
Forget not this!

THE COURTIER'S LIFE

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

In Court to serve deckèd with fresh array,
Of sugar'd meats feeling the sweet repast,
The life in banquets and sundry kinds of play
Amid the press of worldly looks to waste,
Hath with it join'd oftimes such bitter taste,
That whoso joys such kind of life to hold,
In prison joys, fettered with chains of gold.

OF THE MEAN AND SURE ESTATE

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Stand, whoso list, upon the slipper wheel [*slippery*]
Of high estate; and let me here rejoice,
And use my life in quietness each dele, [*part*]
Unknown in court that hath the wanton toys:
In hidden place my time shall slowly pass,
And when my years be past withouten noise,
Let me die old after the common trace;
For gripes of death doth he too hardly pass,
That knowen is to all, but to himself, alas,
He dieth unknown, dased with dreadful face.

AND WILT THOU LEAVE ME THUS?

And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay! for shame!
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame. [*sorrow*]
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
That hath lov'd thee so long?
In wealth and woe among:
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart;
Neither for pain nor smart:
And wilt thou leave me thus?

Say nay! say nay!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
And have no more pity,
Of him that loveth thee?
Alas! thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

OF THE COURTIER'S LIFE

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Mine own John Poins, since ye delight to know
The causes why that homeward I me draw,
And fly the press of courts, whereso they go;
Rather than to live thrall under the awe
Of lordly looks; wrappèd within my cloak;
To will and lust learning to set a law:
It is not that because I scorn or mock
The power of them, whom fortune here hath lent
Charge over us, of right to strike the stroke:
But true it is that I have always meant
Less to esteem them than the common sort.
Of outward things that judge in their intent
Without regard what inward doth resort.
I grant, sometime of glory that the fire
Doth touch my heart. Me list not to report
Blame by honour, and honóur to desire
But how may I this honour now attain
That cannot dye the colour black a liar?
My Poins, I cannot frame my tune to feign,
To cloak the truth, for praise without desert
Of them that list all vice for to retain.
I cannot honour them that set their part
With Venus and Bacchus all their life long;

Nor hold my peace of them, although I smart.
I cannot crouch nor kneel to such a wrong;
To worship them like God on earth alone,
That are as wolves these sely lambs among. [*happy*]
I cannot with my words complain and moan,
And suffer nought; nor smart without complaint:
Nor turn the word that from my mouth has gone.
I cannot speak and look like as a saint;
Use wiles for wit and make deceit a pleasure,
Call crafty counsel, for lucre still to paint.
I cannot wrest the law to fill the coffer,
With innocent blood to feed myself fat,
And do most hurt, where that most help I offer.

. . . . . .

This is the cause that I could never yet
Hang on their sleeves that weigh, as thou mayst see,
A chip of chance more than a pound of wit:
This maketh me at home to hunt and hawk;
And in foul weather at my book to sit;
In frost and snow, then with my bow to stalk;
No man doth mark whereso I ride or go:
In lusty leas at liberty I walk;
And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe;
Save that a clog doth hang yet at my heel.
No force for that, for it is order'd so,
That I may leap both hedge and dyke full well.
I am not now in France, to judge the wine;
With savoury sauce those delicates to feel:
Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline,
Rather than to be, outwardly to seem.
I meddle not with wits that be so fine;
Nor Flanders cheer lets not my sight to deem
Of black, and white; nor takes my wits away
With beastliness; such do those beasts esteem,
Nor I am not, where truth is given in prey

For money, poison, and treason; of some
A common practice, usèd night and day.
But I am here in Kent and Christendom,
Among the Muses, where I read and rhyme;
Where if thou list, my own John Poins, to come,
Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

(1517?–1547)

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

The sootè season that bud and bloom forth brings, [*sweet*]
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale.
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;
The fishes fleet with new repairèd scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallów pursueth the fliès smale; [*small*]
The busy bee her honey now she mings; [*mingles*]
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

THE FRAILTY OF BEAUTY

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Brittle beauty, that Nature made so frail,
Whereof the gift is small, and short the season;

Flowering to-day, tomorrow apt to fail;
  Tickle treasure, abhorred of reason:
Dangerous to deal with, vain, of no avail;
  Costly in keeping, past not worth two peason; [*two pease*]
Slipper in sliding, as is an eel's tail; [*slippery*]
  Hard to obtain, once gotten, not geason:
Jewel of jeopardy, that peril doth assail;
  False and untrue, enticèd oft to treason;
Enemy to youth, that most may I bewail;
  Ah! bitter sweet, infecting as the poison,
    Thou farest as fruit that with the frost is taken;
    To-day ready ripe, tomorrow all to shaken.

A COMPLAINT

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Alas! so all things now do hold their peace!
  Heaven and earth disturbèd in no thing;
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease,
  The nightès car the stars about doth bring.
Calm is the sea; the waves work less and less:
  So am not I, whom love, alas! doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
  Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful case.
  For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure bring;
But by and by, the cause of my disease
  Gives me a pang, that inwardly doth sting,
    When that I think what grief it is again,
    To live and lack the thing should rid my pain.

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A HAPPY LIFE

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Martial, the things that do attain
  The happy life, be these, I find:
The riches left, not got with pain;
  The fruitful ground, the quiet mind:

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife;
  No charge of rule, nor governance;
Without disease, the healthful life;
  The household of continuance:

The mean diet, no delicate fare;
  True wisdom join'd with simpleness;
The night dischargèd of all care;
  Where wine the wit may not oppress:

The faithful wife, without debate;
  Such sleeps as may beguile the night.
Contented with thine own estate;
  Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

HOW NO AGE IS CONTENT WITH HIS OWN ESTATE

(From *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557)

Laid in my quiet bed, in study as I were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts appear;
And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes,

That now I sigh'd, and then I smiled, as cause of thought
did rise.
I saw the little boy in thought how oft that he
Did wish of God to scape the rod, a tall young man to be.
The young man eke that feels his bones with pains oppresst,
How he would be a rich old man, to live and lie at rest.
The rich old man that sees his end draw on so sore,
How he would be a boy again, to live so much the more.
Whereat full oft I smiled, to see how all these three,
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and
change degree.
And musing thus I think, the case is very strange,
That man from wealth, to live in woe, doth ever seek to
change.
Thus thoughtful as I lay, I saw my wither'd skin,
How it doth shew my dented chews, the flesh was worn so
thin.
And eke my toothless chaps, the gates of my right way,
That opes and shuts as I do speak, do thus unto me say:
"Thy white and hoarish hairs, the messengers of age,
That shew, like lines of true belief, that this life doth
assuage;
Bid thee lay hand, and feel them hanging on thy chin;
The which do write two ages past, the third now coming in.
Hang up therefore the bit of thy young wanton time:
And thou that therein beaten art, the happiest life define."
Whereat I sigh'd and said: "Farewell! my wonted joy;
Truss up thy pack, and trudge from me to every little boy;
And tell them thus from me; their time most happy is,
If, to their time, they reason had, to know the truth of this."

SELECTIONS FROM TRANSLATION OF AENEID

(1557)

THE DEATH OF LAOCOON

(From Book II.)

Us caitiffs then a far more dreadful chance
Befel, that troubled our unarmèd breasts.
While Laocoon, that chosen was by lot
Neptunus' priest, did sacrifice a bull
Before the holy altar; suddenly
From Tenedon, behold! in circles great
By the calm seas came floating adders twain,
Which plièd towards the shore (I loath to tell)
With rearèd breast lift up above the seas;
Whose bloody crests aloft the waves were seen;
The hinder part swam hidden in the flood.
Their grisly backs were linkèd manifold.
With sound of broken waves they gat the strand,
With glowing eyen, tainted with blood and fire;
Whose welt'ring tongues did lick their hissing mouths.
We fled away; our face the blood forsook:
But they with gait direct to Lacon ran.
And first of all each serpent doth enwrap
The bodies small of his two tender sons;
Whose wretched limbs they bit, and fed thereon.
Then raught they him, who had his weapon caught [*reached*]
To rescue them; twice winding him about,
With folded knots and circled tails, his waist:
Their scalèd backs did compass twice his neck,
With rearèd heads aloft and stretchèd throats.
He with his hands strave to unloose the knots,

(Whose sacred fillets all-besprinkled were
With filth of gory blood, and venom rank)
And to the stars such dreadful shout he sent,
Like to the sound the roaring bull forth lows,
Which from the altar wounded doth astart,
The swerving axe when he shakes from his neck.
The serpents twain, with hasted trail they glide
To Pallas' temple, and her towers of height:
Under the feet of the which Goddess stern,
Hidden behind her target's boss they crept.

NIGHT

(From Book IV.)

It was then night; the sound and quiet sleep
Had through the earth the wearied bodies caught:
The woods, the raging seas were fallen to rest;
When that the stars had half their course declined,
The fields whist, beasts, and fowls of divers hue,
And whatso that in the broad lakes remained,
Or yet among the bushy thicks of brier,
Laid down to sleep by silence of the night
'Gan swage their cares, mindless of travails past.

Lord Thomas Vaux

(About 1510–1557)

OF A CONTENTED MIND

(From *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1578)

When all is done and said,
In th' end thus shall you find;

He most of all doth bathe in bliss,
That hath a quiet mind:
And, clear from worldly cares,
To deem can be content,
The sweetest time in all his life
In thinking to be spent.

The body subject is
To fickle Fortune's power,
And to a million of mishaps
Is casual every hour:
And Death in time doth change
It to a clod of clay;
When as the mind, which is divine,
Runs never to decay.

Companion none is like
Unto the mind alone,
For many have been harm'd by speech,
Through thinking, few, or none.
Fear oftentimes restraineth words,
But makes not thoughts to cease;
And he speaks best, that hath the skill
When for to hold his peace.

Our wealth leaves us at death,
Our kinsmen at the grave:
But virtues of the mind unto
The heavens with us have.
Wherefore, for virtue's sake,
I can be well content
The sweetest time in all my life,
To deem in thinking spent.

DEATH IN LIFE

(From *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1578)

How can the tree but waste and wither away
That hath not sometime comfort of the sun?
How can the flower but fade and soon decay
That always is with dark clouds overrun?
Is this a life? Nay! death I may it call,
That feels each pain and knows no joy at all.

What foodless beast can live long in good plight?
Or is it life where senses there be none?
Or what availeth eyes without their light?
Or else a tongue to him that is alone?
Is this a life? Nay! death I may it call,
That feels each pain and knows no joy at all.

Whereto serve ears, if that there be no sound?
Or such a head where no device doth grow.
But all of plaints, since sorrow is the ground
Whereby the heart doth pine in deadly woe?
Is this a life? Nay! death I may it call,
That feels each pain and knows no joy at all.

Thomas Tusser

(1524–1580)

POSIES FOR THINE OWN BED-CHAMBER

What wisdom more, what better life, than pleaseth God
to send,
What worldly goods, what longer use, than pleaseth God
to lend?

What better fare than well content, agreeing with thy wealth,
What better guest than trusty friend, in sickness and in health?

What better bed than conscience good, to pass the night with sleep,
What better work than daily care, from sin thyself to keep?

What better thought than think on God, and daily Him to serve,
What better gift than to the poor, that ready be to sterve? [*starve*]

What greater praise of God and man, than mercy for to shew,
Who, merciless, shall mercy find, that mercy shews to few?

What worse despair, than loth to die for fear to go to hell?
What greater faith than trust in God, through Christ in heaven to dwell?

TWO SORTS OF MEN

Since first the world began, there was and shall be still,
Of human kind, two sundry sorts, th' one good and th' other ill;
Which till the judgment day shall here together dwell,
But then the good shall up to heaven, the bad shall down to hell.

Richard Edwards

(1523?–1566)

MAY

(From *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1578)

When May is in his prime,
  Then may each heart rejoice;
When May bedecks each branch with green,
  Each bird strains forth his voice.

The lively sap creeps up
  Into the blooming thorn;
The flowers, which cold in prison kept,
  Now laugh the frost to scorn.

All Nature's imps triúmph
  While joyful May doth last;
When May is gone, of all the year
  The pleasant time is past.

May makes the cheerful hue;
  May breeds and brings new blood;
May marcheth throughout every limb;
  May makes the merry mood.

May pricketh tender hearts
  Their warbling notes to tune;
Full strange it is, yet some, we see,
  Do make their May in June.

Thus things are strangely wrought
  Whiles joyful May doth last:
Take May in time! When May is gone,
  The pleasant time is past.

All ye that live on earth,
  And have your May at will,
Rejoice in May, as I do now,
  And use your May with skill!

Use May while that you may,
  For May hath but his time!
When all the fruit is gone it is
  Too late the tree to climb.

Your liking and your lust
  Is fresh whiles May doth last;
When May is gone, of all the year
  The pleasant time is past.

George Turberville

(1540?–1610)

THE LOVER

My girl, thou gazest much
Upon the golden skies:
Would I were Heaven, I would behold
Thee then with all mine eyes.

George Gascoigne

(1536?–1577)

THE LULLABY OF A LOVER

(From *The Posies*, 1575)

Sing lullaby, as women do,
Wherewith they bring their babes to rest,
And lullaby can I sing too,
As womanly as can the best.
With lullaby they still the child,
And if I be not much beguiled,
Full many wanton babes have I,
Which must be stilled with lullaby.

First lullaby my youthful years,
It is now time to go to bed,
For crooked age and hoary hairs,
Have won the haven within my head:
With lullaby then youth be still,
With lullaby content thy will,
Since courage quails and comes behind,
Go sleep, and so beguile thy mind.

Next lullaby my gazing eyes,
Which wonted were to gaze apace
For every glass may now suffice,
To shew the furrows in my face:
With lullaby then wink awhile,
With lullaby your looks beguile:
Let no fair face, nor beauty bright,
Entice you eft with vain delight. [*afterward*]

And lullaby my wanton will,
Let Reason's rule now reign thy thought,
Since all too late I find by skill,
How dear I have thy fancies bought.
With lullaby now take thine ease,
With lullaby thy doubts appease:
For trust to this, if thou be still,
My body shall obey thy will.

. . . . . .

Thus lullaby my youth, mine eyes,
My will, my ware, and all that was,
I can no more delays devise,
But welcome pain, let pleasure pass:
With lullaby now take your leave,
With lullaby your dreams deceive,
And when you rise with waking eye
Remember then this lullaby.

DE PROFUNDIS

(From *The Posies*, 1575)

From depth of dole wherein my soul doth dwell,
From heavy heart which harbours in my breast,
From troubled spirit which seldom taketh rest,
From hope of heaven, from dread of darksome hell.
O gracious God, to thee I cry and yell.
My God, my Lord, my lovely Lord alone,
To thee I call, to thee I make my moan.
And thou (good God) vouchsafe in gree to take, [*good will*]
This woeful plaint
Wherein I faint.
Oh hear me then for thy great mercies' sake.

. . . . . .

If thou good Lord should'st take thy rod in hand,
If thou regard what sins are daily done,
If thou take hold where we our works begun,
If thou decree in judgement for to stand,
And be extreme to see our excuses scanned,
If thou take note of everything amiss,
And write in rolls how frail our nature is,
O glorious God, O King, O Prince of power,
What mortal wight
May then have light
To feel thy frown, if thou have list to lower?

But thou art good and hast of mercy store,
Thou not delight'st to see a sinner fall,
Thou hearknest first, before we come to call.
Thine ears are set wide open evermore,
Before we knock thou comest to the door.
Thou art more pressed to hear a sinner cry,
Than he is quick to climb to thee on high.
Thy mighty name be praisèd then alway,
Let faith and fear
True witness bear,
How fast they stand which on thy mercy stay.

. . . . . .

Before the break or dawning of the day,
Before the light be seen in lofty skies,
Before the Sun appear in pleasant wise,
Before the watch (before the watch I say)
Before the ward that waits therefore alway:
My soul, my sense, my secret thought, my sprite,
My will, my wish, my joy, and my delight:
Unto the Lord that sits in Heaven on high,
With hasty wing
From me doth fling,
And striveth still unto the Lord to fly.

. . . . . .

He will redeem our deadly drooping state,
He will bring home the sheep that go astray,
He will help them that hope in him alway:
He will appease our discord and debate,
He will soon save though we repent us late.
He will be ours if we continue his,
He will bring bale to joy and perfect bliss.
He will redeem the flock of his elect,
From all that is,
Or was amiss,
Since Abraham's heirs did first his laws reject.

THE STEEL GLASS

(1576)

. . . And thus I sing, when pleasant spring begins,
Like Philomene, since every jangling bird,
Which squeaketh loud shall never triumph so,
As though my muse were mute and durst not sing.

And thus I sing, with harmless true intent,
Like Philomene, when as per case [*meanwhile*]
The cuckoo sucks mine eggs by foul deceit,
And licks the sweet which might have fed me first.

And thus I moan, in mournful wise to sing,
A rare conceit, (God grant it like my lord)
A trusty tune, from ancient cliffs conveyed,
A plain song note which cannot warble well.

For whiles I mark this weak and wretched world,
Wherein I see how every kind of man
Can flatter still, and yet deceives himself,
I seem to muse from whence such error springs,

Such gross conceits, such mists of dark mistake.
Such Surcuydry, such weening over well, [*pride*]
And yet in deed such dealings too too bad.
And as I stretch my weary wits to weigh
The cause thereof, and whence it should proceed,
My battered brains, which now be shrewdly bruised
With cannon shot of much misgovernment,
Can spy no cause, but only one conceit,
Which makes me think the world goeth still awry.
I see and sigh, because it makes me sad,
That peevish pride doth all the world possess,
And every wight will have a looking-glass
To see himself, yet so he seeth him not:

Yea, shall I say? a glass of common glass,
Which glisteneth bright and shews a seemly show,
Is not enough; the days are past and gone,
That Berral glass, with foils of lovely brown,
Might serve to shew a seemly favoured face.
That age is dead and vanished long ago,
Which thought that steel both trusty was and true,
And needed not a foil of contraries,
But shewed all things even as they were indeed.
Instead whereof our curious years can find
The crystal glass which glimmereth brave and bright,
And shews the thing much better than it is,
Beguiled with foils, of sundry subtle sights,
So that they seem and covet not to be.

This is the cause (believe me now my lord)
That realms do rue, from high prosperity,
That kings decline from princely government,
That Lords do lack their ancestors' good will,
That knights consume their patrimony still,
That gentlemen do make the merchant rise,
That ploughmen beg and craftsmen cannot thrive,

That clergy quails and hath small reverence,
That laymen live by moving mischief still,
That courtiers thrive, at latter Lammas day,
That officers can scarce enrich their heirs,
That soldiers starve or preach at Tyburn Cross,
That lawyers buy and purchase deadly hate,
That merchants climb and fall again as fast,
That roisterers brag, above their betters roam,
That sycophants are counted jolly guests,
That Lais leads a lady's life aloft,
And Lucrece lurks with sober bashful grace.

This is the cause (or else my Muse mistakes)
That things are thought which never yet were wrought,
And castles built above in lofty skies,
Which never yet had good foundation.
And that the same may seem no feignèd dream,
But words of worth and worthy to be weighed,
I have presumed, my Lord for to present
With this poor glass, which is of trusty steel,
And came to me by will and testament
Of one that was a Glassmaker indeed.

. . . . . .

And therewithal to comfort me again,
I see a world of worthy government
A commonwealth, with policy so ruled
As neither laws are sold nor justice bought
Nor riches sought, unless it be by right,
Nor cruelty nor tyranny can reign,
No right revenge doth raise rebellion,
No spoils are ta'en although the sword prevail,
No riot spends the coin of commonwealth,
No rulers hoard the country's treasure up,
No man grows rich by subtlety nor sleight:
All people dread the magistrates' decree,

And all men fear the scourge of mighty Jove.
Lo this, my lord, may well deserve the name
Of such a land as milk and honey flows.
And this I see within my glass of steel
Set forth even so by Solon, worthy wight,
Who taught king Croesus what it is to seem
And what to be, by proof of happy end.
The like Lycurgus, Lacedemon king,
Did set to shew by view of this my glass,
And left the same, a mirrour to behold,
To every prince of his posterity.

But now, aye me! the glazing crystal glass
Doth make us think that realms and towns are rich
Where favour sways the sentence of the law,
Where all is fish that cometh to the net,
Where mighty power doth over-rule the right,
Where injuries do foster secret grudge,
Where bloody sword makes every booty prize,
Where banqueting is counted comely cost,
Where officers grow rich by princes' pens
Where purchase comes by covin and deceit, [*fraud*]
And no man dreads but he that cannot shift,
Nor none serve God but only tongue-tied men

. . . . . .

Well, thus, my Knight hath held me all too long,
Because he bare such compass in my glass.
High time were then to turn my weary pen
Unto the Peasant coming next in place.
And here, to write the sum of my conceit,
I do not mean a-lonely husbandmen [*merely, only*]
Which till the ground, which dig, delve, mow and sow,
Which swink and sweat whiles we do sleep and snort,
And search the guts of earth for greedy gain,
But he that labours any kind of way

To gather gains and to enrich himself
By King, by Knight, by holy helping Priests,
And all the rest that live in commonwealth,
So that his gains by greedy guiles be got,
Him can I count a Peasant in his place.
All officers, all advocates at law,
All men of art which get goods greedily,
Must be content to take a Peasant's room.

. . . . . .

These knacks, my lord, I cannot call to mind,
Because they shew not in my glass of steel.
But holloa! here I see a wondrous sight,
I see a swarm of saints within my glass:
Behold, behold, I see a swarm indeed
Of holy saints which walk in comely wise,
Not decked in robes, nor garnishèd with gold,
But some unshod, yea some full thinly clothed,
And yet they seem so heavenly for to see
As if their eyes were all of diamonds,
Their face of rubies, sapphires, and jacinets,
Their comely beards and hair of silver wires
And to be short, they seem angelical.
What should they be, my lord, what should they be?

O gracious God, I see now what they be.
These be my priests which pray for every state,
These be my priests divorcèd from the world
And wedded yet to heaven and holiness,
Which are not proud, nor covet to be rich,
Which go not gay, nor feed on dainty food,
Which envy not nor know what malice means,
Which loath all lust, disdaining drunkenness,
Which cannot feign, which hate hypocrisy,
Which never saw Sir Simony's deceits,
Which preach of peace, which carp contentions, [*chide*]

Which loiter not but labour all the year,
Which thunder threats of God's most grievous wrath,
And yet do teach that mercy is in store.

Lo, these, my lord, be my good praying priests,
Descended from Melchisedec by line,
Cousins to Paul, to Peter, James and John,
These be my priests, the seasoning of the earth,
Which will not lease their savouriness I trow.
Not one of these, for twenty hundred groats,
Will teach the text that bids him take a wife,
And yet be cumbered with a concubine;
Not one of these will read the holy writ
Which doth forbid all greedy usury,
And yet receive a shilling for a pound;
Not one of these will preach of patiënce,
And yet be found as angry as a wasp;
Not one of these can be content to sit
In taverns, inns, or alehouses all day,
But spends his time devoutly at his books;
Not one of these will rail at rulers' wrongs,
And yet be bloated with extortión;
Not one of these will paint out worldly pride,
And be himself as gallant as he dare;
Not one of these rebuketh avarice,
And yet procureth proud pluralities;
Not one of these reproveth vanity,
Whiles he himself, with hawk upon his fist
And hounds at heel, doth quite forget his text;
Not one of these corrects contentións
For trifling things, and yet will sue for tithes;
Not one of these, not one of these, my lord,
Will be ashamed to do even as he teacheth.
My priests have learned to pray unto the Lord,
And yet they trust not in their lip-labour.
My priests can fast and use all abstinence

From vice and sin, and yet refuse no meats
My priests can give in charitable wise
And love also to do good almès deeds,
Although they trust not in their own deserts.
My priests can place all penance in the heart,
Without regard of outward ceremonies.
My priests can keep their temples undefiled
And yet defy all superstitión.

Lo now, my lord, what think you by my priests?
Although they were the last that shewed themselves,
I said at first their office was to pray,
And since the time is such even now-a-days
As hath great need of prayers truly prayed,
Come forth, my priests, and I will bid your beads:
I will presume, although I be no priest,
To bid you pray as Paul and Peter prayed.

Then pray, my priests, yea pray to God himself
That he vouchsafe, even for his Christès sake
To give his word free passage here on earth,
And that his church (which is now militant)
May soon be seen triumphant over all,
And that he deign to end this wicked world,
Which walloweth still in sinks of filthy sin.

. . . . . .

Now these be past (my priests) yet shall you pray
For common people, each in his degree,
That God vouchsafe to grant them all his grace.
Where should I now begin to bid my beads?
Or who shall first be put in common place?
My wits be weary and my eyes are dim,
I cannot see who best deserves the room.
Stand forth, good Peerce, thou ploughman by thy name,
Yet so the Sailor saith I do him wrong:

That one contends his pains are without peer,
That other saith that none be like to his;
Indeed they labour both exceedingly.
But since I see no shipman that can live
Without the plough, and yet I many see
Which live by land that never saw the seas:
Therefore I say, stand forth Peerce ploughman first,
Thou winnest the room by very worthiness.

Behold him, priests, and though he stink of sweat
Disdain him not: for shall I tell you what?
Such climb to heaven before the shaven crowns:
But how? forsooth with true humility.
Not that they hoard their grain when it is cheap,
Nor that they kill the calf to have the milk,
Nor that they set debate between their lords,
By earing up the baulks that part their bounds:
Nor for because they can both crouch and creep,
The guilefullest men that ever God yet made,
When as they mean most mischief and deceit,
Nor that they can cry out on landlords loud,
And say they rack their rents an ace too high,
When they themselves do sell their landlords' lamb
For greater price than ewe was wont be worth.
I see you, Peerce, my glass was lately scoured.
But for their feed with fruits of their great pains
Both King and Knight and Priests in cloister pent:
Therefore I say that sooner some of them
Shall scale the walls that lead us up to heaven
Than corn-fed beasts, whose belly is their God,
Although they preach of more perfectión.

And yet, my priests, pray you to God for Peerce,
As Peerce can pinch it out for him and you.
And if you have a Paternoster spare,
Then shall you pray for Sailors (God them send

More mind of him when as they come to land,
For toward shipwreck many men can pray,)
That they once learn to speak without a lie,
And mean good faith without blaspheming oaths;
That they forget to steal from every freight,
And for to forge false cockets, free to pass;
That manners make them give their betters place,
And use good words though deeds be nothing gay.

But here methinks my priests begin to frown
And say that thus they shall be overcharged
To pray for all which seem to do amiss:
And one I hear, more saucy than the rest,
Which asketh me, when shall our prayers end?
I tell thee, priest, when shoemakers make shoes
That are well sewed, with never a stitch amiss,
And use no craft in uttering of the same;
When tailors steal no stuff from gentlemen,
When tanners are with curriers well agreed,
And both so dress their hides that we go dry;
When cutlers leave to sell old rusty blades,
And hide no cracks with solder nor deceit,
When tinkers make no more holes than they found,
When thatchers think their wages worth their work,
When colliers put no dust into their sacks,
When maltmen make us drink no firmenty,
When Davie Diker digs and dallies not,
When smiths shoe horses as they would be shod,
When millers toll not with a golden thumb,
When bakers make not barm bear price of wheat,
When brewers put no bagage in their beer, [*worthless stuff*,
When butchers blow not over all their flesh, *adulterant*]
When horse coursers beguile no friends with jades,
When weavers' weight is found in housewives' web.
(But why dwell I so long among these louts?)
When mercers make more bones to swear and lie,

When vintners mix no water with their wine,
When printers pass none errors in their books,
When hatters use to buy none old cast robes,
When goldsmiths get no gains by soldered crowns,
When upholsterers sell feathers without dust,
When pewterers infect no tin with lead,
When drapers draw no gains by giving day,
When parchmentiers put in no ferret silk,
When surgeons heal all wounds without delay:
(Tush, these are toys, but yet my glass sheweth all.)

When purveyors provide not for themselves,
When takers take no bribes nor use no brags,
When customers conceal no covine used,
When searchers see all corners in a ship,
(And spy no pens by any sight they see)
When shrives do serve all process as they ought, [*sheriffs*]
When bailiffs strain none other things but strays,
When auditors their counters cannot change,
When proud surveyors take no parting pens,
When silver sticks not on the tellers' fingers,
And when receivers pay as they receive,
When all these folk have quite forgotten fraud,
(Again, my priests, a little by your leave)
When sycophants can find no place in court
But are espied for echoes, as they are,
When roisterers ruffle not above their rule,
Nor colour craft by swearing precious coles: [*falsehoods*]
When fencers' fees are like to apes' rewards,
A piece of bread and therewithal a bob,
When Lais lives not like a lady's peer,
Nor useth art in dyeing of her hair,
When all these things are ordered as they ought,
And see themselves within my glass of steel,
Even then, my priests, may you make holiday,
And pray no more but ordinary prayers.

And yet therein I pray you, my good priests,
Pray still for me and for my glass of steel,
That it nor I do any mind offend,
Because we shew all colours in their kind.
And pray for me that, since my hap is such
To see men so, I may perceive myself.
O worthy words, to end my worthless verse,
Pray for me, Priests, I pray you, pray for me.

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset

(1536–1608)

A MIRROUR FOR MAGISTRATES

(1559)

The wrathful winter, 'proching on apace
With blustering blasts had all ybared the treen, [*trees*]
And old Saturnus, with his frosty face,
With chilling cold had pierced the tender green;
The mantles rent, wherein enwrappèd been
The gladsome groves that now lay overthrowen,
The tapets torn, and every bloom down blowen. [*tapestry: foliage*]

The soil that erst so seemly was to seen,
Was all despoilèd of her beauty's hue;
And sweet fresh flowers (where with the summer's queen
Had clad the earth) now Boreas' blasts down blew,
And small fowles flocking, in their song did rue
The winter's wrath, where with each thing defaste [*defaced*]
In woeful wise bewailed the summer past.

Hawthorne had lost his motley livery,
The naked twigs were shivering all for cold,
And dropping down the tears abundantly;
Each thing (me thought) with weeping eye me told
The cruel season, bidding me withhold
Myselfe within, for I was gotten out
Into the fields, whereas I walked about. [*where*]

When, lo, the night with misty mantles spread,
Gan dark the day, and dim the azure skies,
And Venus in her message Hermes sped
To bloody Mars, to will him not to rise,
While she herself approached in speedy wise;
And Virgo hiding her disdainful breast,
With Thetis now had lain her down to rest.

Whiles Scorpio dreading Sagittarius' dart,
Whose bow prest bent in fight, the string had slipt, [*ready*]
Down slid into the ocean flood apart,
The Bear, that in the Irish seas had dipt
His grisly feet, with speed from thence he whipt;
For Thetis, hasting from the Virgin's bed
Pursued the Bear, that ere she came was fled.

And Phaeton now reaching to his race
With glistering beams, gold streaming where they bent,
Was prest to enter in his resting place.
Erythius that in the cart first went,
Had even now attained his journey's stent: [*limit: end*]
And fast declining hid away his head,
While Titan couched him in his purple bed.

And pale Cynthea with her borrowed light,
Beginning to supply her brother's place,
Was past the noonstead six degrees in sight,

When sparkling stars amid the heaven's face,
With twinkling light shone on the earth apace,
That while they brought about the nightès chare, [*car*]
The dark had dimmed the day ere I was ware.

And sorrowing I to see the summer flowers,
The lively green, the lusty leas forlorne,
The sturdy trees so shattered with the showers,
The fields so fade that flourished so beforne;
It taught me well all earthly things be borne
To die the death, for nought long time may last;
The summer's beauty yields to winter's blast.

Then looking upward to the heaven's leames, [*gleams: lights*]
With nightès stars thick powdered everywhere,
Which erst so glistened with the golden streams
That cheerfull Phoebus spread down from his sphere,
Beholding dark oppressing day so near;
The sudden sight reducèd to my mind, [*brought back*]
The sundry changes that in earth we find.

That musing on this worldly wealth in thought,
Which comes and goes more faster than we see,
The flickering flame that with the fire is wrought,
My busy mind presented unto me
Such fall of peers as in this realm had be;
That oft I wisht some would their woes descryve, [*describe*]
To warn the rest whom fortune left alive.

And straight forth stalking with redoubled pace,
For that I saw the night drew on so fast,
In black all clad there fell before my face
A piteous wight, whom woe had all forwaste,
Forth from her eyen the crystal tears outbrast, [*out-burst*]
And sighing sore, her hands she wrong and fold,
Tare all her hair, that ruth was to behold.

Her body small forewithered and forespent,
As is the stalk that summer's drought opprest,
Her wealkèd face with woeful tears besprent, [*withered*]
Her colour pale, and (as it seemed her best)
In woe and plaint reposèd was her rest.
And as the stone that drops of water wears;
So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.

Her eyès swollen with flowing streams afloat,
Wherewith her looks thrown up full piteously,
Her forceless hands together oft she smote,
With doleful shrieks, that echoed in the sky;
Whose plaint such sighs did straight accompany,
That in my doom was never man did see [*judgment*]
A wight but half so woebegone as she.

I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
Tween dread and dolour so distraind in heart,
That while my hairs upstarted with the sight,
The tears out-streamed for sorrow of her smart:
But when I saw no end that could apart
The deadly dole, which she so sore did make,
With doleful voice then thus to her I spake.

"Unwrap thy woes whatever wight thou be,
And stint in time to spill thyself with plaint; [*stop: de-*
Tell what thou art, and whence, for well I see *stroy, injure*]
Thou canst not dure with sorrow thus attaint."
And with that word of sorrow all forfaint,
She lookèd up, and, prostrate as she lay,
With piteous sound, lo, thus she gan to say,

"Alas, I wretch whom thus thou seest distrained
With wasting woes, that never shall aslake,
Sorrow I am, in endless torments pained
Among the Furies in the infernal lake;

Where Pluto, god of hell, so grisly black
Doth hold his throne and Letheus deadly taste
Doth reave remembrance of each thing forepast.

Whence come I am, the dreary destiny
And luckless lot for to bemoan of those,
Whom Fortune in this maze of misery,
Of wretched chance, most woeful mirrours chose,
That when thou seest how lightly they did lose
Their pope, their power, and that they thought most sure,
Thou mayest soon deem no earthly joy may dure."

Whose rueful voice no sooner had out brayed
Those woeful words, wherewith she sorrowed so,
But out, alas, she shrieked and never stayed,
Fell down, and all to-dashed herself for woe.
The cold pale dread my limbs gan overgo,
And so I sorrowed at her sorrow's eft, [*again*]
That, what with grief and fear, my wits were reft.

I stretched myself, and straight my heart revives,
That dread and dolour erst did so appale; [*appal*]
Like him that with the fervent fever strives,
When sickness seeks his castle's health to scale:
With gathered spirits so forced I fear to avail;
And, rearing her with anguish all fordone, [*raising*]
My spirits return'd, and then I thus begonne.

"O Sorrow, alas, sith sorrow is thy name,
And that to thee this drere doth well pertain, [*gloom*]
In vain it were to seek to cease the same:
But as a man himself with sorrow slain,
So I, alas, do comfort thee in pain,
That here in sorrow art forsunk so deep,
That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep."

I had no sooner spoken of a stike,
But that the storm so rumbled in her breast,
As Æolus could never roar the like,
And showers down rainèd from her eyen so fast,
That all bedreynt the place, till at the last [*bedrenched*]
Well easèd they the dolour of her mind,
As rage of rain doth swage the stormy wind.

For forth she pacèd in her fearful tale:
"Come! come!" quoth she, "and see what I shall shewe,
Come hear the plaining and the bitter bale
Of worthy men, by fortune overthrowe.
Come thou and see them ruing all in rowe,
They were but shades that erst in mind thou rolde. [*consid-*
Come, come, with me, thinè eyes shall them behold." *ered*]

What could these words but make me more aghast:
To hear her tell whereon I mused while ere: [*shortly before*]
Musing upon her words and what they were,
All suddenly well lessened was my fear:
For to my mind returnèd how she telde
Both what she was, and where her wun she helde. [*dwelling*]

Whereby I knew that she a goddess was,
And, therewithall, resorted to my mind
My thought that late presented me the glass
Of brittle state, of cares that here we find,
Of thousand woes to silly men assigned:
And how she now bid me come and behold,
To see with eye that erst in thought I rolde. [*revolved*]

Flat down I fell, and with all reverence
Adorèd her, perceiving now that she,
A goddess sent by godly providence
In earthly shape thus showed herself to me,
To wail and rue this world's uncertainty:

And while I honoured thus her godhead's might,
With plaining voice these words to me she shright: [*shrieked, cried*]
"I shall thee guide first to the grisly lake,
And thence unto the blissful place of rest,
Where thou shalt see and hear the plaint they make,
That whilom here bare swinge among the best. [*sway*]
This shalt thou see, but great is the unrest
That thou must bide, before thou canst attain
Unto the dreadful place where these remain."

And with these words as I upraisèd stood,
And gan to follow her that straight forth paced,
Ere I was ware, into a desert wood
We now were come: where hand in hand embraced,
She led the way and through the thicke so traced, [*thicket*]
As but I had been guided by her might,
It was no way for any mortal wight.

But lo, while thus amid the desert dark,
We passèd on with steps and pace unmeet:
A rumbling roar, confused with howl and bark
Of dogs, shook all the ground under our feet,
And struck the din within our ears so deep
As, half distraught, unto the ground I fell,
Besought return, and not to visit hell.

But she, forthwith, uplifting me apace,
Removed my dread, and with a steadfast mind
Bade me come on, for here was now the place,
The place where we our travail's end should find.
Wherewith I arose, and to the place assigned
Astoynde I stalk, when straight we approachèd near [*astonished*]
The dreadful place, that you will dread to hear.

An hideous hole all vast, withouten shape,
Of endless depth, o'erwhelmed with ragged stone,

With ugly mouth, and grisly jaws doth gape,
And to our sight confounds itself in one.
Here entered we, and yeding forth, anone [*going*]
An horrible loathly lake we might discern,
As black as pitch, that clepèd is Averne. [*called*]

A deadly gulf where nought but rubbish grows,
With foul black swelth in thickened lumpès lies, [*swollen masses*]
Which up in the air such stinking vapours throws,
That over there may fly no fowl but dies,
Choked with the pestilent savours that arise.
Hither we came, whence forth we still did pace,
In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place.

And first within the porch and jaws of hell,
Sat deep *Remorse of Conscience*, all besprent
With tears: and to her self oft would she tell
Her wretchedness, and cursing, never stent [*cease*]
To sob and sigh: but ever thus lament,
With thoughtful care, as she that, all in vain,
Would wear and waste continually in pain.

Her eyes unsteadfast, rolling here and there,
Whirled on each place, as place that vengeance brought,
So was her mind continually in fear,
Tossed and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crimes which she had wrought:
With dreadful cheer, and looks thrown to the sky,
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

Next saw we *Dread*, all trembling how he shook,
With foot uncertain proffered here and there:
Benumbed of speech, and with a ghastly look
Searched every place, all pale and dead for fear,
His cap borne up with starting of his heare, [*hair*]
'Stoin'd and amazed at his own shade for dread, [*astonished*]
And fearing greater dangers than was need.

And next, within the entry of this lake,
Sat fell *Revenge*, gnashing her teeth for ire,
Devising means how she may vengeance take,
Never in rest till she have her desire:
But frets within so far forth with the fire [*exceedingly*]
Of wreaking flames, that now determines she
To die by death, or 'venged by death to be.

When fell *Revenge*, with bloody foul pretence
Had shewed herself, as next in order set,
With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,
Till in our eyes another sight we met:
When fro my heart a sigh forthwith I fet, [*fetched*]
Rueing, alas, upon the woful plight
Of *Misery*, that next appeared in sight.

His face was lean, and somedeal pined away, [*somewhat*]
And eke his hands consumèd to the bone,
But what his body was I cannot say,
For on his carcass raiment had he none,
Save cloutes and patches piecèd one by one
With staff in hand, and scrip on shoulders cast,
His chief defence against the winter's blast.

His food, for most, was wild fruits of the tree,
Unless sometimes some crumbs fell to his share,
Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he,
As on the which full daint'ly would he fare.
His drink the running stream: his cup the bare
Of his palm closed: his bed the hard cold ground:
To this poor life was *Misery* ybound.

Whose wretched state when we had well beheld,
With tender ruth on him and on his fears,
In thoughtful cares forth then our pace we held;

And by and by another shape appears,
Of greedy *Care*, still brushing up the breres,
His knuckles knob'd, his flesh deep dented in,
With tawèd hands, and hard ytannèd skin. [*roughened: battered*]

The morrow gray no sooner had begun
To spread his light, even peeping in our eyes,
When he is up and to his work yrun:
But let the night's black misty mantles rise,
And with the foul dark never so much disguise
The fair bright day, yet ceaseth he no while,
But hath his candles to prolong his toil.

By him lay heavy *Sleep*, the cousin of *Death*,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath
Small keep took he whom Fortune frownèd on,
Or whom she lifted up into the throne
Of high renown, but as a living death,
So dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's ease, the still night's fere was he, [*companion*]
And of our life in earth the better part;
Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be. [*happen*]
Without respect, esteeming equally
King Crœsus' pomp, and Irus' poverty.

And, next in order, sad *Old Age* we found,
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him assigned
To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined
His vital thread, and ended with their knife
The fleeting course of fast declining life.

There heard we him with broken and hollow plaint
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
And all for naught his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste;
Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek
And to be young again of Jove beseek.

But, and the cruel fates so fixèd be,
That time forpast can not return again,
This one request of Jove yet prayèd he:
That in such withered plight and wretched pain,
As eld (accompanied with his loathsome train)
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might a while yet linger forth his lief, [*life*]

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it;
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light, but in the ground ylain,
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing, how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forpast, as though it wrought him good
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone,
He would have mused and marvelled much whereon
This wretched *Age* should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life does but length his pain.

Crook backt he was, toothshaken, and blear eyed,
Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on fower, [*four*]
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,

His scalp all pilde, and he with eld forlore: [*bald*]
His withered fist still knocking at *Death's* door,
Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath,
For brief, the shape and messenger of *Death*.

And fast by him pale *Malady* was placed,
Sore sick in bed, her colour all forgone,
Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste,
Ne could she brook no meat, but broth alone
Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
Abhorring her, her sickness past recure, [*recovery*]
Detesting physick, and all physick's cure.

But oh! the doleful sight that then we see;
We turned our look and on the other side
A grisly shape of *Famine* might we see,
With greedy looks, and gaping mouth, that cried
And roar'd for meat, as she should there have died;
Her body thin and bare as any bone,
Whereto was left nought but the case alone.

And, that, alas, was gnawen on every where,
All full of holes, that I ne might refrain
From tears, to see how she her arms could tear,
And with her teeth gnash on the bones in vain:
When all for nought she fain would all sustain
Her starven corpse, that rather seemed a shade,
Than any substance of a creature made.

Great was her force, whom stone wall could not stay,
Her tearing nails scratching at all she saw;
With gaping jaws that by no means ymay
Be satisfied from hunger of her maw,
But eats herself as she that hath no law:
Gnawing, alas, her carcass all in vain,
Where you may count each sinew, bone, and vein.

On her while we thus firmly fixed our eyes,
That bled for ruth of such a dreary sight,
Lo, suddenly, she shrieked in so huge wise
As made hell gates to shiver with the might.
Wherewith, a dart we saw, how it did light
Right on her breast, and therewithal pale *Death*
Enthrilling it, to reave her of her breath. [*piercing: transfixing*]

And, by and by, a dumb dead corpse we saw,
Heavy and cold, the shape of *Death* aright,
That daunts all earthly creatures to his law;
Against whose force in vain it is to fight:
Ne peers, ne princes, nor no mortal wight,
Ne towns, ne realms, cities, ne strongest tower,
But all perforce must yield unto his power.

His dart anon out of the corpse he took,
And in his hand (a dreadful sight to see)
With great triúmph eftsoons the same he shook, [*straightway*]
That most of all my fears affrayèd me:
His body dight with nought but bones, pardé,
The naked shape of man there saw I plain,
All save the flesh, the sinew, and the vein.

Lastly stood *War* in glittering arms yclad,
With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly hued;
In his right hand a naked sword he had,
That to the hilts was all with blood embrued;
And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued)
Famine and fire he held, and therewithal
He razèd towns, and threw down towers and all.

Cities he sacked, and realms (that whilom flowered
In honour, glory, and rule above the best)
He overwhelmed, and all their fame devoured,

Consumed, destroyed, wasted, and never ceased,
Till he their wealth, their name, and all oppressed:
His face forehewed with wounds, and by his side [*cut in*
There hung his targe with gashes deep and wide. *front*]

In midst of which, depainted there, we found
Deadly *Debate*, all full of snaky hair,
That with a bloody fillet was ybound,
Out breathing nought but discord everywhere:
And round about were portrayed here and there
The hugie hosts, Darius and his power,
His kings, princes, his peers, and all his flower;

Whom great Macedo vanquished there in fight,
With deep slaughtér, dispoiling all his pride,
Pierc'd through his realms, and daunted all his might.
Duke Hannibal beheld I there beside,
In Canna's field, victor how he did ride,
And woeful Romans that in vain withstood,
And Consul Paulus covered all with blood.

Yet saw I more, the fight at Trasimene,
And Treby field, and eke when Hannibal
And worthy Scipio last in arms were seen
Before Carthago gate, to try for all
The world's empire, to whom it should befall.
There saw I Pompey and Caesar clad in arms,
Their hosts allied, and all their civil harms: [*broils: evils*]

With conquerors' hands forbathed in their own blood,
And Caesar weeping over Pompey's head.
Yet saw I Scilla and Marius where they stood,
Their great cruelty, and the deep bloodshed
Of friends: Cyrus I saw and his host dead,
And how the queen with great despight hath flung
His head in blood of them she overcome

Xerxes, the Persian king, yet saw I there,
With his huge host that drank the rivers dry,
Dismounted hills and made the vales uprear,
His host and all yet saw I slain, pardé.
Thebés I saw all razed how it did lie
In heaps of stones, and Tyrus put to spoil,
With walls and towers flat evened with the soil.

But Troy, alas (me thought) above them all,
It made mine eyes in very tears consume,
When I beheld the woeful wierd befall, [*fate*]
That by the wrathful will of gods was come:
And Jove's unmovèd sentence and foredome [*fore doom*]
On Priam king, and on his town so bent,
I could not lin, but I must there lament. [*cease*]

And that the more, sith Destiny was so stern
As, force perforce, there might no force avail
But she must fall: and, by her fall, we learn
That cities, towers, wealth, world, and all shall quail; [*die*,
No manhood, might, nor nothing might prevail, *pass away*]
All were there prest, full many a prince and peer; [*at hand*]
And many a knight that sold his death full dear.

Not worthy Hector, worthiest of them all,
Her hope, her joy; his force is now for nought.
O Troy, Troy, Troy, there is no boot but bale;
The hugy horse within thy walls is brought:
Thy turrets fall, thy knights that whilom fought
In arms amid the field, are slain in bed;
Thy gods defiled, and all thy honour dead.

The flames upspring, and cruelly they creep
From wall to roof, till all to cinders waste:
Some fire the houses where the wretches sleep,

Some rush in here, some run in there as fast;
In every where or sword or fire they taste.
The walls are torn, the towers whirled to the ground;
There is no mischief but may there be found.

Cassandra saw I yet there how they haled
From Pallas' house with spercled tress undone. [*scattered*]
Her wrists fastbound, and with Greeks' rout empaled:
And Priam eke, in vain how he did run
To arms, when Pyrrhus with despite hath done
To cruel death, and bathed him in the baigne [*bath*]
Of his son's blood, before the altar slain.

But how can I describe the doleful sight,
That in the shield so lifelike fair did shine!
Sith in this world, I think was never wight
Could have set forth the half, nor half so fine.
I can no more but tell how there is seen
Fair Ilium fall in burning red gledes down, [*glowing frag-*
And, from the soil, great Troy, Neptunus' town. *ments*]

Herefrom when scarce I could mine eyes withdraw,
That filled with tears as doth the springing well,
We passèd on so far forth till we saw
Rude Acheron, a loathsome lake to tell,
That boils and bubs up swelth as black as hell,[1]
Where grisly Charon at their fixèd tide
Still ferries ghosts unto the farther side.

The aged god no sooner Sorrow spied,
But hasting straight unto the bank apace,
With hollow call unto the rout he cried,
To swerve apart and give the goddess place.
Straight it was done, when to the shore we pace,

[1] Casts up lumps of putrid matter.

Where hand in hand as we then linkèd fast,
Within the boat we are together plaste. [*placed*]

And forth we launch full freighted to the brink,
When, with the unwonted weight, the rusty keel
Began to crack as if the same should sink.
We hoist up mast and sail, that in a while
We fetched the shore, where scarcely we had while
For to arrive, but that we heard anone
A three-sound bark confounded all in one.

We had not long forth past, but that we saw
Black Cerberus, the hideous hound of hell,
With bristles reared, and with a three-mouthed jaw,
Foredinning the air with his horrible yell.
Out of the deep dark cave where he did dwell,
The goddess straight he knew, and by and by,
He peaste and couched while that we passèd by. [*became silent*]

Thence came we to the horrour and the hell,
The large great kingdoms and the dreadful reign
Of Pluto in his throne where he did dwell,
The wide waste places, and the hugy plain:
The wailings, shrieks, and sundry sorts of pain,
The sighs, the sobs, the deep and deadly groan.
Earth, air, and all, resounding plaint and moan.

Here puled the babes, and here the maids unwed
With folded hands their sorry chance bewailed;
Here wept the guiltless slain, and lovers dead,
That slew themselves when nothing else availed;
A thousand sorts of sorrows here that wailed
With sighs and tears, sobs, shrieks, and all yfere, [*together: mixed*]
That (oh, alas!) it was a hell to hear.

We stayed us straight, and with a rueful fear
Beheld this heavy sight, while from mine eyes

The vapored tears downstillèd here and there, [*distilled*]
And Sorrow eke in far more woeful wise,
Took on with plaint, upheaving to the skies
Her wretched hands, that with her cry the rout
Gan all in heaps to swarm us round about.

"Lo here," said Sorrow, "princes of renown,
That whilom sat on top of Fortune's wheel
Now laid full low; like wretches whirlèd down
Even with one frown that stayed but with a smile:
And now behold the thing that thou erewhile
Saw only in thought, and what thou now shalt hear
Recount the same to Kesar, King, and Peer."

Then first came Henry, Duke of Buckingham,
His cloak of black all pilled and quite forworn, [*thread-*
Wringing his hands, and Fortune oft doth blame, *bare*]
Which of a duke hath made him now her scorn,
With ghastly looks as one in manner lorn
Oft spread his arms, stretched hands he joins as fast
With rueful cheer, and vapored eyes upcast.

His cloak he rent, his manly breast he beat,
His hair all torn about the place it lay,
My heart so molt to see his grief so great [*melted*]
As feelingly, me thought, it dropped away:
His eyes they whirled about withouten stay,
With stormy sighs the place did so complain
As if his heart at each had burst in twain.

Thrice he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thrice the sighs did swallow up his voice,
At each of which he shriekèd so withal,
As through the heavens rivèd with the noise:
Till at the last recovering his voice,
Supping the tears that all his breast berained, [*sopped*]
On cruel Fortune weeping thus he plained.

Sir Philip Sidney

(1554–1586)

SONNETS

(From *Astrophel and Stella*, before 1582?)

I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she! might take some pleasure of my pain:
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain:
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain:
Oft turning others leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burn'd brain.

But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
Invention, nature's child, fled step-dame study's blows;
And others' feet seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throws,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite;
Fool! said my muse to me, look in thy heart, and write.

V

It is most true that eyes are form'd to serve
The inward light; and, that the heav'nly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
Rebels to Nature, strive for their own smart.
It is most true, what we call *Cupid's* dart,
An image is, which for ourselves we carve;

And, fools, adore in temple of our heart,
Till that good god make church and church-men starve.

True, that true beauty virtue is, indeed,
Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,
Which, elements, with mortal mixture breed:
True, that, on earth, we are but pilgrims made,
And should, in soul, up to our country move;
True! and yet true, that I must *Stella* love.

XXVI

Though dusty wits dare scorn Astrology,
And fools can think those lamps of purest light,
Whose numbers weigh greatness, eternity,
Promising wonders, wonder do invite:
To have, for no cause, birthright in the sky,
But for to spangle the black weeds of night:
Or for some brawl, which in that chamber high,
They should still dance to please a gazer's sight.

For me, I do nature un-idle know
And know, great causes great effects procure:
And know, those bodies high reign on the low.
And if these rules did fail, proof makes me sure,
Who oft fore-judge my after-following race,
By only those two stars in *Stella's* face.

XLVIII

Soul's joy, bend not those morning stars from me,
Where virtue is made strong by beauty's might;
Where *Love* is chasteness, pain doth learn delight,
And humbleness grows on with majesty:
Whatever may ensue, O let me be
Copartner of the riches of that sight:

Let not mine eyes be hell-driv'n from that light:
O look! O shine! O let me die, and see!

For though I oft myself of them bemoan,
That through my heart their beamy darts be gone,
Whose cureless wounds, e'en now, most freshly bleed,
Yet, since my death-wound is already got,
Dear killer, spare not thy sweet cruel shot;
A kind of grace it is to slay with speed.

LXXIV

I never drank of *Aganippe's* well,
Nor ever did in shade of *Tempe* sit:
And Muses scorn with vulgar brains to dwell:
Poor layman I, for sacred rites unfit.
Some do I hear of Poet's fury tell,
But (God wot) wot not what they mean by it:
And this I swear, by blackest brook of hell,
I am no pick-purse of another's wit.

How falls it then, that with so smooth an ease
My thoughts I speak, and what I speak doth flow
In verse, and that my verse best wits doth please?
Guess we the cause? What, is it thus? Fie, no:
Or so? Much less: How then? Sure thus it is,
My lips are sweet, inspir'd with *Stella's* kiss

SONG

To the tune of *Non Credo gia che piu infelice Amante.*

I

The nightingale as soon as *April* bringeth,
Unto her rested sense, a perfect waking,

What late bare earth, proud of new clothing, springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making.

And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth,
For *Thereus'* force on her chaste will prevailing.

O *Philomela* fair! O take some gladness,
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness:
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without; my thorn my heart invadeth.

II

Alas! she hath no other cause of anguish,
But *Thereus'* love, on her by strong-hand wroken, [*wreaked*,
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish, *inflicted*]
Full woman-like, complains her will was broken.

But I, who daily craving,
Cannot have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me,
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.

O Philomela fair! O take some gladness,
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness:
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without; my thorn my heart invadeth.

A FAREWELL

Leave me, O Love! which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things:
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;

What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide,
In this small course, which birth draws out to death,
And think how ill becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell, World, thy uttermost I see,
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in Me!

Splendidis Longum Valedico Nugis

NOTES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.L. Belles Lettres Series.
A.S. Albion Series.
E.E.L. Stopford Brooke's History of Early English Literature.
E.W. Morley's English Writers.
E.M.L. English Men of Letters.
D.N.B. Dictionary of National Biography.
N.E.D. New English Dictionary.
E.E.T. Early English Text Society's Publications.
S.T.S. Scottish Text Society's Publications.
M.L.A. Modern Language Association's Publications.
J.G.P. Journal of Germanic Philology.
M.P. Modern Philology.
M.L.N. Modern Language Notes.

PRONUNCIATION OF SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT PROPER NAMES OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY

Widsith (Weed-seeth)
Deor (Dayor)
Hrothgar (Hroth-gahr)
Beowulf (Bay-o-wolf)
Heorot (Hay-o-rote)
Geats (Gay-a-ts)
Hygelac (Hidge-ē-lahc)
Cædmon (Kadmon)
Cynewulf (Kin-e-wolf)
Ermanric (Air-man-reek)
Wudga (Wood-ga)
Hama (Hah-ma)

NOTES

PART FIRST

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

BOOKS USEFUL IN CONNECTION WITH THE STUDY OF OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

The study of Germanic antiquities has been unduly neglected in our schools and colleges, because of the inaccessibility and highly technical character of most of the literature connected with the subject. The following brief book-list is confined to works accessible in English, and not too technical for the student and general reader. It is in no sense a "bibliography," and the strict limitation to books in English has compelled the omission of even so excellent a little volume as Axel Olrik's *Nordisches Geistesleben*, or such noble essays as Uhland's on the *Thor and Odin Myth*, or so thoroughly readable a book as Golther's *Germanische Mythologie*, all of which deserve to be translated into English. The Germans themselves are beginning to realize the importance of presenting the results of their scholarship to a wider public, in books of a more "popular" character, written from a literary and educational point of view. The little *Deutsche Heldensage* of Dr. Jiriczek, in the *Goeschen* library (also English in the Temple Primers), is an excellent example of this tendency.

Mythology. J. S. Stallybrass, *Teutonic Mythology*, translated from the 4th ed. of Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*. A standard work of reference. — M. S. Smith, *Northern Mythology* (Temple Primers), translated from the German of

Professor D. F. Kaufmann. The best brief sketch of Germanic mythology. — Anderson, *The Prose Edda.* — Vigfusson and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale.* Gives the poetic Edda, in the original, with a prose translation at the foot of the page. — *The Mythologic Poems of the Edda*, edited and translated with Introduction and Notes by Olive Bray, Viking Club Series.

Heroic Legend and Saga. M. B. Smith, *Northern Hero Legends* (Temple Primers), from the German of O. Jiriczek.

Norse Sagas. *The Volsunga Saga*, translated by Magnusson and Morris (Camelot Series). — *The Grettis Saga*, by the same. — *The Njals Saga.* (Abridged from the original edition of Sir G. W. Dasent, London, Grant Richards, 1900.)— *Saxo Grammaticus*, translated by Oliver Elton. The Danish History of Saxo is a mine of legendary lore.

Germanic Institutions. F. B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins.* The best survey of the subject in English. — Paul Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age.* (Full of valuable quotations and illustrations not easily accessible elsewhere, but full also of inaccuracies of statement.) Every student of Old English literature should be familiar with the *Germania* of Tacitus, at least in translation.

Histories of Old English Literature. The best general history of this period is Bernhard ten Brink's *Early English Literature*, translated by H. M. Kennedy (Henry Holt and Co.). The best aesthetic criticism of Old English Literature is found in the books of Stopford Brooke, *The History of Early English Literature* and *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest;* the first is a detailed study of Old English Poetry; the second is a briefer recast of the first, with added chapters on King Alfred and West Saxon prose. Stopford Brooke writes with a fine appreciation of the poetic values of Old English verse. His translations are spirited, though their diction tends to be too archaic, and they often miss the rhythms of the original.

Old English Poetry. The introductions to the volumes of the Belles Lettres (D. C. Heath and Co.) and Albion (Ginn and Co.) series of Anglo-Saxon poetry contain much of interest

to the general student of Old English Literature. Professor Gummere's *Oldest Germanic Epic* translates into English alliterative verse *Widsith, Deor's Lament, The Finsburg Fragment, The Waldere Fragments*, and the whole of *Beowulf:* the best verse translation of *Beowulf*, remarkably close to the rhythm and language of the original. Cook and Tinker, *Translations from Old English Poetry.* W. M. Hart, *Ballad and Epic* (Vol. XI of Harvard Studies and Notes, Ginn and Co., 1907). A valuable study in early literary forms. Thomas Arnold, *Notes on Beowulf.* For other references to Beowulf literature, and for a list of Beowulf translations, see the notes on Beowulf.

THE OLD ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE METRE

Anglo-Saxon poetry from its earliest beginnings to the Norman Conquest was composed in the ancient alliterative measure common to all the people of Germanic stock. Though this measure continued to be used in England after the Conquest (see *Layamon's Brut, Sir Gawayne, Piers Ploughman*), even as late as the sixteenth century, it gradually declined during the Middle English period, and was either supplanted or fundamentally modified by measures of foreign origin. For a brief discussion of Old English metre, see Professor Gummere's *Handbook of Poetics,* Chap. VII (Ginn and Co.), and Professor R. M. Alden's *English Verse* (Henry Holt and Co.).

1. **The Four-Stress Alliterative Line.** Old English rhythms are based on the Germanic law of accentuation, according to which the most important words or parts of words were emphasized by a strong stress of the voice. This involved the subordination of *quantitative* accent based on the length of syllables, to *stress accent* based on their significance. When such stressed accents or beats of the voice recur at regular intervals, we perceive *rhythm;* and even though the intervals between the individual beats may vary, our sense of rhythm will be awakened if we can note a *regular recurrence of groups of*

beats, in twos or threes or fours. Now the chief characteristic of Old English verse is that its words were so arranged that there was a constant recurrence of two pairs of heavy beats, and that the most important of these heavy beats began with the same sound (alliteration). This gives us as the unit of Old English verse *a line of four beats, divided into two halves by a pause, but linked together by alliteration.*

Hyge sceal þe **heardr**a, **heort**e þe cenre;
Mod sceal þe **m**ara, þe ure **mæg**en lytlaþ.
— *Battle of Maldon.*

(Heart must be keener, courage the hardier;
Bolder our mood, as our band diminisheth.)

2. **Alliteration.** When words or syllables begin with the same sound, they are said to alliterate. Alliteration is still used in English verse, but it is largely ornamental and casual, as *e.g.* in Shelley's *Cloud:*

That orbed **m**aiden, with white fire laden
Whom **m**ortals call the **m**oon
Glides **gl**immering o'er my **fl**eece-like **fl**oor
By the **m**idnight breezes strewn.

In Old English poetry, on the other hand, alliteration was *structural* and *regular*. As it was much older than writing, it was and is concerned with sounds, not letters. *King* and *cook* keep good company in alliteration, though they begin with different letters. *King* and *knight* do not, though they begin with the same letter.[1] Furthermore, as alliteration was addressed to the ear and not to the eye, it always fell on stressed syllables. Thus *forsaken* and *feeble* do not alliterate, even though they begin with the same sounds; while *forsake* and *beseech* do alliterate, though they begin with different sounds. In the latter case *for* and *be* are merely prefixes, and stress and alliteration alike fall on the significant syllables.

[1] In Old and Middle English when the *k* of knight was still pronounced, they of course alliterated.

As in the great majority of Old English words the first syllable was the significant syllable, both stress and alliteration generally fall on first syllables. Take these lines:

> The **folk** of the **fen** in **for**mer days (p. 13, l. 10)
> **Named** him Grendel: un**known** his father,
> Or what his **de**scent from **de**mons obscure.

In "named" and "unknown," the alliteration, though not apparent, is real. In "descent" and "demons," on the other hand, the alliteration, though apparent, is not real, because the alliteration does not fall on the stressed syllable in "descent."

As the function of alliteration in Germanic verse is to link together the two halves of the four-stress line, the first stressed syllable of the second half-verse must always be a member of the alliterative group. We may therefore call this syllable the *alliterative dominant*. In the majority of cases *both* stressed syllables of the first half-verse alliterate with the dominant. When only one of them alliterates, it is preferably *the first*, but it may be the second. Examples of the three resulting types of alliteration in the order of their frequency follow:

1 : 2 : 3: Gewat þa ofer **wæg**holm **winde** gefysed
Flota **fami**gheals, **fug**le gelicost. (*Beowulf*, l. 217.)

(**Went** then o'er the **wave**-sea, by the **wind** favored
The **floater foamy**-necked, to a **fowl** likest.)

1 : 3: On **flo**des æht **feor** gewitan (l. 42).
(In the **flood**'s power **far** to wander.)

2 : 3: Geseah he in **re**cede **rinc**a manige (l. 729).
(Saw he in the **wine**-hall of **war**riors a many.)

The fourth stress never alliterates with the third, or dominant in Old English verse of the classic period, but it may alliterate with the second and rarely with the first, when these are not in alliteration with the dominant. This gives us two additional types of alliteration.

1 : 3 : 2 : 4 (alternating alliteration):

> **Hilde**-**wæpn**um and **heaþo**-**wæd**um (l. 39).
> (With **brave weap**ons and **battle**-weeds.)

1 : 4 : 2 : 3 : **Wit** þæt ge**cwæd**on **cniht-wes**ende (l. 535).
(**We** that **boast**ed when **boys** we **were.**)

All vowels alliterate:

Isig and **ut**fus æþelinges fær (l. 33).
(**Ic**y and **out**bound, **eth**eling's barge.)

Innan and **ut**an **ir**enbendum (l. 775).
(**In**side and **out**side with **ir**on bands.)

3. **The Pause or Cæsura.** The Old English alliterative line is regularly divided into two half-verses by a pause between the second and third stress. This *cæsura* is sometimes merely rhythmic, sometimes it is a sense pause. Compare these two lines:

Ofer hronrade hyran scolde, (l. 10)
Gomban gyldan: þæt wæs god cyning!

or these:

Willing comrades may crowd around him (p. 6, l. 23)
Eager and true. In every tribe, etc.

Though the cæsura always comes between the second and third stress, it does not always come in the middle of the line, as the half-verses may be of unequal length. Compare:

Grette Geata leod,||gode þancode
Wisfæst wordum,||þæs þe hire se willa gelamp (l. 625).

Monotony is avoided by this inequality in the length of half-verses (see next section, *unstressed syllables*), and by run-on lines, where the meaning "runs on" from the end of one line into the next (*enjambment*). Compare

Egsode eorl, syþþan ærest wearþ
Feasceaft funden; he þæs frofre gebad (6).

Or

Then climbed aboard (p. 7, l. 7)
The chosen troop; the tide was churning
Sea against sand; they stowed away
In the hold of the ship their shining armor, etc.

In spite of such devices, the fixed cæsura is responsible for a certain monotony in the movement of Old English epic verse, in striking contrast to the rich modulations of Greek epic verse or the epic verse of Milton and Tennyson, with its free treatment of the cæsura.

4. **Unstressed Syllables**. While the number of stressed syllables in Old English verse is constant, the number of unstressed syllables varies freely. Compare the following lines:

Gód mid Geátum, Gréndles dǽda (l. 195).
Gewát þa ofer wǽgholm wínde gefýsed (l. 217).
Gewát him þa to wároþe wícge rídan (l. 234).
Se þe his wórdes gewéald wíde hǽfde (l. 79).
Mánna ǽngum, þara þe hit mid múndum bewánd (l. 1462).

Unstressed syllables are added most freely at the beginning of the second half-verse. The varieties of half-verses have been reduced by Professor Sievers to five fundamental types, but a discussion of them is beyond the scope of this note. (For a brief statement of Sievers' types see Alden, p. 152.) The most important result of the Old English freedom with regard to unaccented syllables is *variation in the rapidity of the verse*, or *tempo*.

Gewát þa ofer wǣgholm, wínde gefýsed

is a rapid line, and admirably suggests the buoyant movement of the boat.

Gómban gýldan : þæt wæs gód cýning
(Gave him gold, 'twas a good king)

is a slow line, and suggests weight and dignity. The importance of the proportion of stressed to unstressed syllables in the tempo of verse-rhythm may be illustrated by a comparison between Old English and blank verse. Blank verse belongs to the " syllable-counting " variety of English verse, *i.e.* there are normally ten syllables in every line, five unaccented syllables alternating with five accented. This is the metrical scheme of the iambic pentameter. (We need not here touch on the moot question of the relation of quantity to stress.

While the length of syllables is by no means a negligible factor, either in old or modern English verse, the fact remains that English rhythms, old or modern, are based on the Germanic stress accent, to which quantity has been made subordinate.) The following line from *Paradise Lost* is a " normal " iambic pentameter so far as number of syllables and accents are concerned :

And swims or sinks or wades or creeps or flies.

(It has however an abnormal number of pauses.) If we subject a number of consecutive lines of *Paradise Lost* to the test of reading aloud, we shall note that Milton not only constantly departs from the scheme of regular alternation of unaccented with accented syllables, but that even the number of *main stresses* in each line varies considerably. Thus in the first sixteen lines of *Paradise Lost*, there are ten lines with four main stresses, two with three, and only four lines with the " normal " number of five. Moreover, the line

O'er bog, o'er steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare

has six accents; and the line

For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce

has even seven. In all these lines the number of syllables remains practically constant. Now, when the number of main stresses is reduced, the tempo of the line is accelerated; when the number of accents is increased the tempo of the line is retarded.

Compare

In the beginning how the heavens and earth

with

O'er bog, o'er steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare.

In iambic pentameter, therefore, the tempo is modified by varying the number of main stresses, while the number of syllables remains constant. In Old English verse, on the other hand, *the tempo is modified by varying the number of syllables, while the main stresses remain constant.* Fundamentally different as is the rhythm of blank verse from that of the Old Eng-

lish alliterative line, it is interesting to note that owing to this variability of tempo, individual lines with identical rhythm may be found:

Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill (*Paradise Lost*).
Hynþu and hrafyl. Ic þæs Hrothgar mæg (*Beowulf*).
Strongly to suffer and support our pains (*Paradise Lost*).
Swæse gesiþas, swa he selfa bad (*Beowulf*, 29).

5. **Rising and Falling Rhythms.** The rhythm of Old English verse is predominatingly falling, *i.e.* the rhythmic units are composed of stressed followed by unstressed syllables:

Gúþmod grúmmon, gúman onétton

is a typical line. Examples of falling rhythms in modern English are

Tell me not in mournful numbers (*trochaic*)

and

Solemnly, mournfully, dealing its dole (*dactylic*).

Of rising rhythms

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield (*iambic*)

and

I saw from the beach when the morning was shining
A bark o'er the waters move gloriously on (*anapæstic*).

The reason for the prevalence of falling rhythms (" dactylic " and " trochaic ") is inherent in the structure of Old English, which was rich in light formative syllables, *added* to the root. In modern English these formative syllables have dropped off, often being replaced by particles *preceding* the root. In every such case a naturally falling rhythm has been changed into a naturally rising rhythm. Cf. Old English *síngan* (falling), with *to sing* (rising); *Gódes lúfu* with *the lóve of Gód; Wélandes gewéorc* with *the wórk of Wáyland.* Accordingly, rising rhythm (iambic, anapæstic) seems to be more natural to the genius of modern English than to that of Old English, whose falling rhythms fit it so well for describing the crash of combat, and the blows of sword and battle-axe, falling on helmet and shield.

6. **Coincidence of Rhythmic and Emphatic Stress.** One of the most important differences between Old English epic verse and modern English epic verse, as found, *e.g.*, in Milton and Tennyson, remains to be stated. In Old English verse there is never any conflict between rhythmic and emphatic stress, *i.e.* between the stress required by the metric scheme and the stress required by the meaning of the line. In reading Old English verse, if the words important to the sense are strongly emphasized, and the unimportant words are hurried over, the rhythm will invariably be brought out. On the other hand, if the opening passage of *Paradise Lost* is accented according to the sense alone, something very like prose will result. While if we accent according to the metric scheme alone, and without any regard to the sense, something very like sing-song will result. The music of Milton's blank verse, and of all great English blank verse, is due to the free interplay and balanced conflict between sense and rhythm. You must read with the rhythm in your ear, and the sense in your mind. There is consequently a double focus for the attention, a *rhythmic* and a *logical*. *In Old English poetry rhythmic and logical focus coincide.* The rhythmic structure of Old English verse may be compared to the old Germanic hall, whose four solid corner posts squarely support the burden of the roof. While English blank verse may be compared to a Gothic cathedral, whose groined ceiling seems to hover overhead upheld by the interplay of complicated thrusts taken up by arch and buttress and clustered column.

THE RENDERING OF THE OLD ALLITERATIVE LINE IN MODERN FORM

Any attempt to reproduce exactly and accurately the Old English alliterative line must necessarily fail, first because the language has changed, and second because our ear has changed with it. The "gait" of English verse has become smoother and more regular; and the rider accustomed to the paces of a well-broken saddle-horse is apt to be unseated by the gait of

a Pegasus that "bucks." It is especially the second half-verses with their initial rush of unaccented syllables that are trying to the modern ear. In a line like the following:

Mánna ængum þara þe hit mid múndum bewánd,

where the second half-verse starts with a mad career of unstressed syllables and then brings up suddenly on two heavy stresses, the incautious rider is apt to "come a cropper" at the close.

Again, the juxtaposition of stressed syllables is much more common in Old English than in modern English verse, and offers another difficulty to the modern ear. Cf. such a line as

Ongán céallian þa, ofer céald wáter.
(Began calling then o'er the cold water).

The only way to get accurately the movement of Old English verse is to learn to read it in Old English. But it is not impossible to reproduce for a wider circle of readers the spirit of the old rhythm, by preserving its essential features in a form adapted to the requirements of modern English speech. These essential features, which any translation professing to reproduce the old alliterative line must preserve, are the following:

1. **The Four-stress Line.**

Glory great was given to Beowulf.

2. **The Medial Cæsura.**

Done were his days; the Danes were glad.

Unless a passage like the following clearly strikes the ear as exceptional, the translation fails to reproduce one of the most important features of Old English metre:

Spray-frosted trees o'erspread it, and hang
O'er the water, with roots hard-wedged in the rocks.

3. **The Alliterative Scheme**, based on the first stressed syllable of the second half-verse, the "alliterative dominant." Nearly all the verses in our translation will be found to conform to one of the five alliterative types given above. In the few instances where there is no alliteration, or where two stresses

in the second half-verse alliterate (see especially the lyrics), metrical considerations have been waived in the interest of poetry. The proportion of 1 : 2 : 3 alliterations, however, is much less, and of alternating alliterations 1 : 3 : 2 : 4, and 1 : 4 : 2 : 3 is much greater than in Old English.

4. **The Prevalence of Falling Rhythm.** The preponderance of falling rhythms, with their heavy stresses on the beginnings of words or word groups, must be maintained at all hazards. Though it is undoubtedly true that the prevalent "natural" rhythm, for narrative verse at any rate, in Modern English has become rising (iambic), it is too much to say with Swinburne that "dactylic forms of verse are unnatural and abhorrent to the English language," unless we use the word dactylic strictly in the classic sense as a *quantitative* foot. On the other hand, the loss of inflectional syllables, which has changed hundreds of dissyllabic words (*singan, sing; Godes, God's* or *of God; scipu: ships*, etc.) into monosyllables, seriously affects the proportion of masculine to feminine endings of half-verses, upon which so much of the total effect of the verse-rhythm depends. In the first 100 lines of Beowulf, 81 of the first half-verses, and 71 of the second half-verses have feminine endings, *i.e.* end with an unstressed syllable. If we compare the first selection in our translation, we find that in 52 lines 43 first half-verses and 37 second half-verses have feminine endings in the original, while only 17 first half-verses, and 25 second half-verses have feminine endings in the translation.

5. **Variation of Speed or Tempo**, due to irregular number of unstressed syllables. Modern English does not permit the same freedom as Old English in the use of unstressed syllables, especially at the beginning of the half-verses (anakrusis). But the translator must avoid going to the other extreme of awaking the sense for the regular tempo of iambic or trochaic four-stress rhythm (octosyllabic verse). A succession of lines such as this:

Of little use that life he deemed (p. 11, l. 84)

or:

Do thy best now, dearest Beowulf (p. 25, l. 140)
Shield thy life and show thy valor

would utterly fail to reproduce the variety of movement, and the often breathless haste of Old English verse, though reproducing faithfully enough the four beats, the medial cæsura, and the alliteration on the significant syllables. On the other hand, an even dactylic or anapæstic movement, the "tumbling measure" of later verse, would be too light and rapid. Compare *e.g.* the tempo of *Piers Ploughman* with that of the *Beowulf* selections. The elimination of many of the "hypermetric" syllables of the anakrusis, and their more even distribution between stresses, together with the unavoidable neglect of the quantity of stressed syllables in Old English, has probably given to our translation a somewhat lighter and more rapid movement, in its total effect, than the hammer-blow style of the Old English verse.

6. Coincidence of Rhythmic and Emphatic Stress. This is one of the most essential features to be preserved. Significant words must receive the rhythmic stress. No words of minor significance (particles, prepositions, etc.) must require the rhythmic stress.

Í stand bý thee tó the end (p. 25, l. 144).

This line breaks the rule by the emphasis it places on *by* and *to*. The irregularity here is intentional, and was introduced for a certain dramatic effect, which the Old English poet could obtain by other means.

Though we are accustomed to think and write of the Germanic alliterative measure as obsolete, or having only an antiquarian and philological interest, it would be easy to show that English poetry, especially blank verse, from Marlowe's

"Black is the beauty of the brightest day"

to Arnold's

"Mixed with the murmur of the moving Nile"

is thick-sprinkled with lines that remember the movement, still

stirring in our pulses, of our ancestral four-stress alliterative measure.[1]

I. CHARMS

The two charms translated in the text are remnants of a kind of incantation whose origins must be looked for in the pagan past of the Germanic races. They are echoes of the solemn chant that anciently accompanied religious processions, and properly represent the earliest and most primitive strata of Old English poetry. In the form in which they have been handed down they are much overlaid with Christian lore, but it is not difficult to recognize the primitive mythologic strata. The Christian church made no attempt ruthlessly to eradicate all ancient beliefs and practices. Pope Gregory advised the English Christians to consecrate the places of pagan ritual to the new religion, but not to destroy them; to respect the ancient forest sanctuaries and sacrifices, and to proceed everywhere with restraint and moderation. This explains the strange medley of Christian and Pagan conceptions so common in Old English literature.

Cockayne's *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England* (London, 1866) contains an interesting collection of charms, spells, cures, etc. On the subject of Germanic charms consult Gummere's *Germanic Origins* (Scribner's, 1891), pp. 372 ff. and 405 ff., where both of our charms are translated in full, and commented on.

The Ploughman's Charm

1. **Erce Erce.** An unexplained term, probably the name of an ancient Earth-goddess. We are reminded of a famous passage in the *Germania* of Tacitus (cap. 40) where he describes the cult of the Earth-goddess Nerthus, as practised by the Ingvaeonic races of the North Sea coast. "All of these people

[1] The expanded long line ("Schwell-vers") and the remnants of stanzaic structure in O.E. verse are touched on in the proper place in the notes.

(among them 'Anglii') worship *Nerthus, i.e. mother earth.* They believe that she intervenes in human affairs, and visits the people." [in commune Nerthum, id est terram matrem colunt, eamque intervenire rebus hominum, et inveni populis arbitrantur.] Like the Norse Freyja, she is a kind of Germanic Demeter (Koegel), a goddess of earth and mother of vegetation. In the springtime she holds her progress, and is welcomed everywhere with eager joy, for in the tracks of her chariot drawn by cows, ancient symbols of fertility, rich harvests spring up. When she has blessed meadow and field, she returns to her underworld home beneath the surface of a lonely mere.

2—17. Hail to thee, Earth, mother of men. According to Tacitus, the Germanic peoples believed mankind to be descended from Tuisto, whose mother was the earth. In Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale (see p. 217), the old man knocks with his staff on the ground, "which is my *moodres* gate" and says "Leeve *mooder*, leet me in," and it is quite possible that in the poetic figure there lurks a reminiscence of the old pagan notion of the earth mother of men. The next lines in the charm are pure pagan, and reveal the same conception that underlies the myth of Freyr and Gertha in the Icelandic *Skirnismal.* Freyr the Son of Njord (another form of the root found in Nerthus) is the god of the fertilizing rain, and then of fertility in general. He rides on the ship Skidbladnir (the cloud), which he can fold and slip into his pocket when his journey is done. His flashing sword is the sunshine, that comes after the rain to make the world green. His sword he gives to his servant Skirnir (the polisher, burnisher, cleanser), who is to woo for him the beautiful giants' daughter Gerd (the plant-world, released by the sunshine from the fetters of the wintry frost-giants). In the last lines the Christian coloring again predominates.

Charm for a Sudden Stitch

The rheumatism to be cured is thought to be caused by the darts of the "mighty women" that ride through the air.

" Hexenschuss " (Hagshot), and " Hexenstich " (Hagstitch), are still popular names in Germany for rheumatism. It is possible that there is in this charm a faint reminiscence of the northern myth of the Valkyrias, the shield-maidens of Odin, who bring to Valhalla (hall of the slain), the heroes that fall in the battle.

In one of the Eddic songs we read of a band of Valkyrias riding through the air and led by a maiden with a gleaming gold helmet. " Their chargers tossed their heads; from their manes the dew dropped into the deep valleys." In an Old High German charm for the release of prisoners, three bands of " august women " are described settling down upon earth, and helping the warriors against the foe. With the introduction of Christianity, the " august women " and the shield-maidens of Odin degenerated into hags and witches who send their darts into the vitals of unwary mortals.

> " The hag is astride
> This night for to ride
> The devil and she together
> Through thick and through thin
> Now out and now in
> Though ne'er so foul be the weather." — *Herrick.*

(See the whole poem in *Standard English Poems*, p. 112.)

3. — 26. **Shot of Esa,** *i.e.* of the gods. " Esa " is gen. pl. The nom. pl. would be Esè. The sing. " Os " is preserved in proper names, Oswald, Oscar, etc. In Old German the root appeared as " ans," preserved in Anselm (Ans-helm). The Norse pl. is Æsir. In the Eddas the Esir are specialized into war-sprites, while the spirits of nature kindly to man, like Njord and Freyr, are called " Vanir." — 27. **Shot of Elves.** In the Eddas " Esir ok alfar," *i.e.* gods and elves, are often mentioned together. The sing., Ælf, is preserved in Ælfred, *i.e.* the Elf-counselled, the Elf-wise, and in Alberich, *i.e.* the ruler of Elves. Originally friendly beings, they have become malicious sprites in our charm, together with the Æsir. In Scotland flint arrow-heads, relics of an earlier age, are called

elf-arrows or elf-bolts, and they are supposed to be hurled not only at human beings, but especially at cattle.

> " There every herd by sad experience knows
> How winged with fate their elf-shot arrows fly."
> — COLLINS, *Ode on Highland Superstitions.*

34. **Witch fly away.** In old German, witches are called wood-wives, and were supposed to inhabit the wild forest. We must not lay too much stress on the echoes of the Valkyria myth in our charm. Even before the introduction of Christianity, Germanic folklore had its wicked women and wood-wives, who had nothing to do with the shield-maidens of Norse mythology. The Norse had their " svart-alfar," black or wicked elves, as well as their " ljos-alfar," light or good elves. " The heathen Teuton saw all round him a varied race of demons (especially wood-sprites such as O.H.G. *haga-zussa*, O.E. *haegtes*, *i.e.* German hexe, witch, and Goth. *haljaruna*, O.H.G. *helleruna*, O.E. *hellerune*) in their several haunts, against whose malignant power his only resource was zealous devotion to witchcraft." — KAUFMANN, *Northern Mythology*, Temple Primers, p. 18.

In the *Havamal*, one of the Eddic poems, there is an interesting allusion to just such a " spell " as is preserved in our charm. The poet says:

> " A spell I can work when witch-women ride
> Speeding swift through the air.
> My runes are strong. I can stop their flight
> Hurry them naked home
> Home with bewildered wits."

Other charms he claims to know which have the power of releasing foot from fetter, hand from haft, and of checking an arrow in full flight.

II. OLD ENGLISH EPIC

Widsith

As the Charms preserve remnants of ancient mythical conceptions and pagan cult, so the poem of *Widsith*, preserves the memory of heroes sung in the earliest epic lays of the Germanic peoples. Around the names of the leaders of Goths and Vandals, Lombards, Franks, Burgundians, and Huns, who collided with each other and with the waning power of Rome from the fourth to the sixth centuries, the great cycles of Germanic Epic tradition arose. The earliest home of this tradition was the hall of the king, where among heroes and nobles the gleeman chanted his lay. It was not a poetry of the people in the true sense, but a poetry of the fighting class, for the fighting class, and by the fighting class. The form of the epic lay, in continuous verse chanted or recited to the accompaniment of the harp, as distinguished from earlier choric songs in strophic form mentioned by Tacitus, seems to have been first developed among the Goths, and to have spread from them to the Franks and other West-Germanic tribes. Cassiodorus, a historian of the sixth century, tells how Chlodwig, the founder of the Frankish kingdom, asked Theodoric the Ostrogoth to send him a gleeman practised in the art of chanting lays to the accompaniment of the harp, and the Old English *Widsith* is a striking testimony to the large contribution made by the vanished Goths to Old Germanic Epic.

The Epic Lay, at first a recital of actual occurrence, became in time overlaid with legendary and mythical material. Names and events were confused; where memory failed, imagination supplied color and detail, until often there was little left that was historic but the names of the heroes themselves looming dim through the centuries. Out of such historic and legendary lays of the great halls, poets of a later generation wove long and stately epics, to be read and recited, but no longer sung as of old. The Byzantine historian Priscus gives

an interesting picture of a Germanic hall of the fifth century, and of the gleeman's song. Sent as an emissary to the hall of Attila, whose court was patterned after the Germanic fashion, Priscus describes how he and his companions, before entering, were offered the drinking cup and uttered the ancient Germanic greeting "wæs hæl" (wassail). Then they passed to the seats ranged along opposite sides of the hall. In the centre raised above the others was Attila's seat, and on his right was the seat of honor. The guests were greeted in order by the king, who drank the health of each, and was greeted standing by each in return. When evening came, torches were lighted, and two gleemen standing opposite to Attila, recited lays in which they praised his victories and his prowess in war. "All the guests gazed upon the gleemen; some were pleased by their lays, others were reminded of their own battles and were filled with enthusiasm, but some wept, the strength of whose bodies had been sapped by time and whose fiery spirits age had subdued."

The poem of *Widsith* owes its preservation to the fact that it was copied into the Exeter Book, an important Ms. collection of Old English poems given by Archbishop Leofric to the cathedral library at Exeter about 1050, and still preserved there. *Widsith* comprises 143 lines. Our selection gives 111–119, 88–111, 127–143. Widsith is the name of a typical and imaginary gleeman or minstrel, who has visited many lands and sung in the halls of many kings. (Old English *wid*, far, wide; *sīth*, journey.) In Old English the singer was called "scop," from Old English *scieppan*, to shape, to create (cf. derivation of *poeta*). The catalogue of tribes and rulers that forms the core of the poem points to the period before the English left their continental homes on the Elbe and Weser. It is customary to refer to these lists as having merely an antiquarian value. But in the days when Attila, Ermanaric, Theodoric, Offa, Hrothgar, Gunther, Wudga, Hama, and the rest of them were heroes of well-known lays, the mere mention of their names must have had an imaginative and

emotional value entirely lost to us. "Bare lists of words," says Emerson, "are found suggestive to an imaginative and excited mind." These memories of the heroes of Germanic Epic preserved in a long tradition of oral lays, running back to continental times, and variously modified in transit, were finally written down by a monkish scribe who could not resist the temptation of extending the itinerary of Widsith by including the Israelites and the Assyrians, the Medes and the Persians, the Saracens, and the Moabites, and sundry other impossible bookish tribes and countries. In spite of these incongruities and interpolations, *Widsith* remains one of the most interesting records, as it certainly is the oldest, in the literature of the Old English, dealing with the Epic memories common to all the Germanic races. Cf. Professor Gummere's *Oldest English Epic*, where the whole of *Widsith* is translated and commented on. For a recent discussion of the philological and archæological problems involved, see article by Dr. W. W. Lawrence in *Modern Philology*, 1906, Vol. IV, p. 329.

3. — 1–9. The first nine lines form an introduction written in England, probably in the eighth or ninth century, and consequently much more recent than the core of the poem, which antedates the Anglo-Saxon settlement. "Widsith," the far-wanderer, is described as belonging to the Myrgings, a Low-German tribe dwelling near the mouth of the Elbe, the old home of the Angles. He undertakes a journey to the court of the Ostro-Gothic King Ermanric, in the company of his queen Alhild. The object of this journey seems to have been the marriage of Alhild to Ermanric; hence she is called weaver-of-peace. She leaves her home to become the bride of the Ostrogoth, just as in the Nibelungenlied, Kriemhild leaves her brothers to marry Attila the Hun. Ermanric, king of the Ostrogoths, is a historic figure. He died by his own hand in 375 A.D., on account of the destruction of his kingdom by the Huns. In early Gothic tradition he was remembered as a great and famous king, whose tragic death, so unlike that of the typical Germanic hero, made a profound impression on his

people, and naturally lent itself to the transforming touch of the imagination. Jordanes, a Gothic historian writing nearly two hundred years after the death of Ermanric, still calls him the noblest of the Amalungs. In later West-Germanic and Norse epic tradition his character was entirely changed, and he became a type of the tyrant and traitor, cruel and faithless. According to *Deor's Complaint*, he had a wolfish heart, and the writer of the *Widsith* prologue calls him ruthless traitor and treaty-breaker. This later tradition represents him as having killed his own son, and having his innocent wife Swanhild torn to pieces by wild horses. For the story of him see *Northern Hero Legends*, pp. 29 ff. (Translated from the German of Jirizcek by M. B. Smith in the Temple Primers series, Dent and Co.)

4. — 10. **I was with Ermanric**, etc. Lines 9–87, omitted in the translation, comprise lists of tribes and rulers supposed to have been visited by Widsith. Line 88 returns to the subject of Ermanric, and this makes so close a connection with the prologue that one wonders whether the intervening portions were not interpolated. Dr. Lawrence, in his exhaustive study of the structure and interpretation of *Widsith*, says: "This is perhaps the most important division of the poem." It is noticeable that the character which Widsith himself gives to Ermanric differs from that ascribed to him by later tradition, for the "ruthless traitor" of the prologue is here pictured as a noble and generous king. This in itself is an evidence that the core of the poem is older than the prologue. — 11. **Gave me a ring.** One of the commonest kennings or descriptive epithets applied to the king in Old English poetry is ring-giver, bracelet bestower. Professor Gummere notes that the heavy gold ring is marked with its value, and that spirals of gold twisted about the arm were broken off by the king, each round having a definite value. Hence the king is also called the ring-breaker. — 19. **Edwin's Daughter.** Edwin, a Langobard or Lombard king, known to history as Audoin. The original home of the Lombards was on the Elbe, near the Angles or Myrgings.

Edwin's son, Alboin, invaded Italy in 568. In a passage omitted in the translation, Widsith says, "I was with Ealfwine [Old English for Alboin] in Italy." Paul the Deacon, a Lombard historian, tells how Alboin forced his wife, Rosamond, to drink from a cup made from the skull of her own father, whom he had killed. (See Swinburne's tragedy, *Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards*.) Historically it is of course impossible that Alhild, Edwin's daughter, hence sister of Ealfwine or Alboin, who invaded Italy in the sixth century, should have been a contemporary of Ermanric, who died in the fourth, and that Widsith, who says he was with Alboin in Italy, should have been with Ermanric "all that while"; but Epic tradition has no sense of historic perspective. The heroes of the past are contemporary in the great Epic cycles, — they are seen on the same plane, just as the distant mountain ranges, fold on fold, merge into one sky-line for the eye. So in the *Nibelungenlied*, Theodoric, the great Ostrogoth, is present at the court of Attila the Hun, who died two years before Theodoric was born. — 35. **Wudga and Hama**. According to Jordanes, Widigoia (Old English Wudga, Widga) was a Gothic hero who fell in the wars against the Sarmatians before the time of Ermanric. There were lays about him, and he was soon drawn into the cycle of Ermanric's heroes, and together with Hama became champion of the Gothic king in his wars against the Huns. The battle near Wistlawudu, *i.e.* Vistulawood, here alluded to (the place is mentioned in l. 121 of the original), seems to be a reminiscence of the ancient homes of the Goths on the Vistula, before they wandered south to the Danube. If this be so, it is the most ancient historic reminiscence in Germanic Epic. Hama is the Heime of Middle High German Epic. He is mentioned in *Beowulf* as the captor of a famous necklace, "Brisingamene." As champions of Ermanric, this pair underwent the same process of moral deterioration as their leader, and in later tradition become the types of brave but cruel and ruthless slayers. In this capacity they figure in the fine Middle High German poem of Alphart's Death. (See *Northern Hero Legends*, p. 122.)

5. — 42. **Thus fated to wander.** The poem closes on the minor chord that rings through so much of Old English poetry. So Beowulf says:

> "To each of us here the end must come
> Of life upon earth: let him who may
> Win glory ere death. I deem that best,
> The lot of the brave, when life is over."

"Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam" But the Germanic conclusion is not Horace's or Omar's "Let us drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," but rather "Let us fight and win fame, for to-morrow we fall." See also the closing lines of the *Battle of Maldon* (p. 93), and the fine stanza in the Norse *Lay of Hamthir:*

> "We have fought a brave fight, on fallen Goths we stand;
> Like eagles on treetops high, on the heap of the slain we perch.
> Glory great is ours, whether we die to-day or to-morrow,
> For none shall live till evening, when the Norns have spoken the word."

It is the same note that Tennyson strikes in the *Ballad of the Revenge;* and the brave speech of Sir Richard Grenville seems to echo the very words of the old Germanic hero:

> "We have fought such a fight, for a day and a night
> As may never be fought again.
> We have won great glory, my men,
> And a day less or more
> At sea or ashore,
> We die, — does it matter when?"

BEOWULF

Among Old English poems whose subject-matter belongs to the old heathen time, by far the most important is *Beowulf.* There were similar hero-poems in vogue, not only among the Old English, but also among their kinsfolk, the Goths, the Franks, and the Northmen; but with the exception of a few fragments, all of these have been lost or transformed by the spirit of a later age; so that the poem of *Beowulf,* belonging

to England, as it does, has a still wider interest as being the earliest, and the only complete epic of the heroic age of the Teutons, preserved in the ancient alliterated verse form. *Date.* — *Beowulf* is preserved in a single Ms. now kept in the British Museum. It is written in the dialect spoken in Wessex in the eleventh century. This West Saxon version is possibly directly due to the interest which King Alfred († 901) took in the older poetry of his people, as a result of which copies were made in his time and after, of poems written in the North of England in the seventh and eighth centuries. The original Ms. was probably written in Northumbria toward the end of the seventh century, after the introduction of Christianity in the north (637), and before the Danish invasions put an end to Northumbrian culture (eighth century). *Authorship.* — No author is known ; we cannot even apply the word " author " in the modern sense, — in the sense in which we speak of Milton as the author of *Paradise Lost.* There are numerous theories of authorship. These may be divided into two classes. (1) *The ballad theory*, which conceives the poem to be the result of piecing together various lays or early ballads sung by minstrels in the hall. According to this theory, the making of the Epic out of earlier lays was a more or less mechanical business, and the scholars who have developed it have emphasized the inconsistencies and incongruities of style and structure with much ingenuity in the interest of their theory. Some of the greatest *Beowulf* scholars, like Muellenhoff and Ten Brink, have held this theory, and at one time it had wide acceptance. For a survey of the ballad theory of *Beowulf* see J. E. Routh, Jr., *Two Studies on the Ballad Theory of the Beowulf*, Johns Hopkins dissertation, 1905. (2) *The theory of a single poet.* — Those who hold that *Beowulf* is the work of a single poet do not deny that the poem is based on oral lays sung in the hall to the accompaniment of the harp, but they insist that the Epic poet did more than piece these lays together. He took the theme of the lays, and much of their old traditional phrasing, but broadened the treatment by description, characteriza-

tion, more subtle motivation through the introduction of long speeches, etc., so that now the story became matter for reading rather than for song or chanted recital in hall. Those who hold this theory explain the inconsistencies and incongruities of the poem as we have it, as being due to the peculiarities of Old English poetic style, and lay stress on the many evidences of unity of plan and structure, as, for instance, the consistently developed character of the hero himself. There has been in recent years a reaction against the extremes of the ballad theory as worked out by Muellenhoff, Ten Brink, and their followers, and the weight of scholarship is inclining to some form of the single authorship theory. See the first chapter of *Northern Hero Legends*, where the distinction between the ancient choric hymns, the later Epic lays, and the still more recent literary Epic is clearly and succinctly drawn. Assuming, then, a single author for *Beowulf*, he must have been a Northumbrian poet of the seventh century, who used ancient lays of Beowulf's fight against monsters, but softened and civilized the character of Beowulf after the model of the converted kings of Northumbria, thus making him in every respect the contemporary ideal of English heroism. No one who is familiar with the writings of King Alfred can fail to be struck by the similarity of tone between his sentiments and many of Beowulf's speeches. So the landscape, the manners and customs, and in general the setting, must be ascribed to this unknown Anglian poet of the seventh century. Also, of course, the superficial Christian coloring, and the scattered biblical allusions.

Sources. — The sources of *Beowulf* were oral lays, brought over by the Angles in the sixth century from their old homes on the continent, where they were the neighbors of Jutes and of Danish folk. This explains how it comes that while the scenery and characterization point to seventh-century North-England, the scenes and characters are all continental Germanic, Danish, Swedish, Jutish, etc. Hrothgar is a Dane. The poem opens with a genealogy of Danish kings. The hall

Heorot was in Denmark. Beowulf belonged to the Geats, according to some, a tribe of southern Sweden, according to others, the Jutes, inhabitants of Jutland. *Historic Elements.* — Though historic memories do not constitute the main strand of the *Beowulf* narrative, as they do of the *Nibelungenlied*, there are recollections of actual occurrence imbedded in the folk-lore and semimythical adventures which are in the centre of interest. Thus the raid which Chocilaicus (Latinized Frankish form of the Old English Hygėlac) made in 520 A.D. against Franks and Frisians, according to Gregory of Tours, and in which the invader lost his life, is several times alluded to in *Beowulf*. The hero was a nephew of Hygelac, and probably accompanied his uncle on this raid. Soon after this he succeeded his kinsman as king of the Jutes. Beowulf is therefore a historic figure who ruled over the Geats or Jutes during the middle of the sixth century, — the very time when the Angles, their neighbors, began to migrate to England. *Myth and Folklore.* — In Old English genealogies occurs the name of Beowa as one of the mythical founders of the royal line. It has been supposed that Angles and Saxons, before their migration to England, celebrated him in song, and that the adventures of Beowulf in the poem belonged originally to this mythical Beowa. When the fame of the historic Beowulf was at its height, towards the close of the sixth century, the deeds of the older shadowy Beowa, of like-sounding name, were transferred to Beowulf, and thus out of mingling of myth and historic tradition the lays on which the poem was founded are supposed to have arisen. According to this " mythologic theory " of the origin of Beowulf,[1] he was originally a kind of Sun-god, like Freyr of the Norse mythology, and Grendel is variously interpreted as an embodiment of the terrors of the misty moors, the stormy sea, the pestilence of the morass, etc. Owing to changing conceptions as to the origin of nature myths, recent scholars reject many of the conclusions of the

[1] Recently Prof. Axel Olrik in his *Danish Epic* connects a Finnish deity *Pekko* with Beowa.

mythological interpreters, and refuse to see in Beowulf and his fights against the monsters any profound supernatural significance. No doubt in the stories of Beowulf's encounter with the nicors, with Grendel and his dam, there are reminiscences of actual fights with bears, walrus, whales, etc.; and in so far as these have been " monstrified " by popular imagination, we are dealing with mere folklore. But in the story of the Sheaf-child (see note on myth of the Sheaf-child), and of Beowulf's last fight with the fire-dragon, it is difficult not to recognize some of the deeper significance that the " mythologic interpretation " finds in them. See Stopford Brooke's *History of Early English Literature*, Chap. V. For parallels to the Beowulf story in Norse Literature see *Grettis Saga* (translated by Magnusson and Morris), and the *Saga of Hrolf Kraki*. (The relations of the latter to Beowulf are discussed by W. W. Lawrence, *Modern Language Publications*, June, 1909, p. 220. Professor Lawrence sharply criticizes the mythologic interpretation of Beowulf.)

Translations. — For a complete list of Beowulf translations see C. B. Tinker. The most useful prose versions for the student are the following: (1) C. G. Child's, Riverside Literature Series, No. 159, Houghton Mifflin Co. (2) C. B. Tinker's, New York, Newson and Co., 1902. (3) J. R. Clark Hall, London, 1901. (Valuable introduction.) The most recent translation is Professor Gummere's in alliterative verse (*Oldest English Epic*, Macmillan's, 1909), a fine reproduction of the movement of Old English rhythms, and a very close rendering of the original. (Good notes.)

The Myth of the Sheaf-Child

The Epic of *Beowulf* opens with a partly mythic genealogy of the Danish King Hrothgar, about whose hall, Heorot, the adventures of the first part centre. Scyld, the mythic founder of the line, is called " Scefing." " Ing " being the regular patronymic ending in Old English, this formula, Scyld Scefing, = Scyld the Sheaf-Child, came to be interpreted as equivalent

to Scyld the son of Sceaf, and this imagined father of Scyld is actually mentioned in Old English genealogies. Of him early chroniclers tell the same story here related of Scyld Scefing. Thus Ethelward, a chronicler of the tenth century, relates how Sceaf as a little child drifted ashore on an island called Skaney, in a boat loaded with arms, and how he later became king of that people. William of Malmesbury, telling the same story after Ethelward, adds that the child was asleep, his head resting on a *sheaf of wheat*. "The region where he ruled is called Old Anglia, whence the English came into Britain, and it is situated between the Saxons and the Jutes." If William has here preserved an ancient feature of the story, it would seem that the myth of the sheaf-child was originally Anglian, and was imported into the Danish genealogy. Some scholars think that Scyld was the common ancestor of Danish and English tribes. According to the mythologic interpretation, we have here an ancient culture myth. Ship and sheaf symbolize navigation and agriculture; the weapons and treasure symbolize war and kingship. The four together would symbolize the civilization of the low-German tribes of the North Sea coast, and Scyld Scefing would represent the founder of this civilization.

6. — 18. **Beowulf's fame**, etc. This Danish Beowulf, heir of Scyld Scefing, is not to be confused with the hero of the poem, who was a Geät or Jute. He is probably identical with the Beäw of the Old English genealogies, who is there mentioned as a son of Scyld. — 32. **Out in the Bay a boat was waiting**. This mode of burial was common among the old Northmen. When Sigmund in the *Volsunga Saga* carries his dead son Sinfjotli (Fitela in *Beowulf*) to the shores of a fjord, he meets a man in a boat, who ferries the body across the water. This is Odin conveying the dead to his kingdom. Sometimes fire was set to the burial ship. In the *Ynglinga Saga*, Haki, mortally wounded, has one of his ships loaded with armor and bodies of the slain; tarred wood is stacked over all, and when the wind draws from the land, the sails are hoisted, the pyre

kindled, and the burning ship is sent to sea. The prose *Edda* tells how the body of Balder the good was laid on the ship *Ring-horn*. On the funeral pyre were placed Balder's ring, and his horse with its costly trappings. Then, in the presence of all the gods, the burial ship was lighted and sent seaward. At a later time it was customary to place both ship and body in a barrow or burial vault. In 1880 a well-preserved Viking boat with human remains was unearthed near Gokstad in Norway. For other references to ship burial see Grimm's Mythology, II, 790. With the story of Scyld Scefing, compare the Coming and Passing of Arthur in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

The Sea Voyage

7. — 1. The band of Jutes. Beowulf's people are called "Geatas" in the poem. They are generally believed to have inhabited southern Sweden; but there is good reason for thinking that a tribe of northern Jutland is meant, neighbors of the Angles and Saxons in their old home, and I have therefore consistently translated Geatas as Jutes.

The Fight with Grendel

Grendel, the monster that ravages Hrothgar's hall, is a strange combination of man and beast. In appearance manlike, but "huger in bulk than human kind," he is compared to an outlaw banished from the habitations of men. His name helps to humanize him. The other monsters have no names. He is his mother's only son. His father is unknown, though by a curious allusion to a Jewish legend, his descent from Cain is suggested. He has hands and arms and fingers, and human feelings surge in his breast. He laughs, he wails. He is filled with hatred and envy at the sound of human revelry. Yet with all these human traits, he is at bottom more beast than man. His "hands" and "fingers" are armed with huge claws. He tears his victims like a wild beast, gulps their blood, and devours their bodies. His lair is among "wolf-

cliffs wild." Though he has the power of human feeling, he lacks the power of human utterance. His gruesome song, that the Danes hear from the wall, is a mere poetic figure for the howl of the wounded beast. There is a touch of the supernatural about him, too. His body is spelled against sword-stroke. Iron cannot hurt him. His mother's den, in which he dies, is beneath the surface of a haunted mere. Mysterious gleams flash from its depths at night. He is descended from demons. There is something diabolical about him, and when Beowulf kills him, he departs to the " fiends' domain." An interesting comparison might be drawn between Grendel and Shakespeare's Caliban.

9. — 6. **The house of revelry rose in his path.** Heorot, " Stag hall " (Old English *heorot*, hart, stag), probably derived its name from the antlers that adorned the gable-ends. In the Finnsburg lay there is an allusion to the " horned gables of the hall." For a description of the Scandinavian hall, see Clark Hall's *Beowulf*, p. 174. The building was rectangular, with rows of pillars running down each side. The space between wall and pillars was raised in two tiers above the main floor, and served for seats. In front of these were ranged the tables, — boards laid on trestles, and removed at night, when the retainers slept in the hall. The hearth was in the centre, and the smoke found its way out through openings in the roof. Halfway down the tier of seats, generally on the south side, was the " high-seat," occupied by the lord of the hall. For a description of the customs of a Germanic hall, see note on *Widsith*.

10. — 25. **But Wyrd had otherwise willed his doom.** " Wyrd " (Norse Urd, one of the three Norns) is the Old English goddess of fate, whom even Christianity could not entirely displace. " Fair are the glories of Christ; Wyrd is strongest," says an Old English proverb. (See *Gnomic Verses*, p. 75, l. 4.) The weird sisters, *i.e.* the " fate sisters," in *Macbeth* are survivals in Scottish tradition of the Germanic Wyrd. For a striking picture of the Norse " weavers of

Fate," see the *Icelandic Njals Saga*, Chap. 157. (Dasent's translation, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, republished, London, Grant Richards, 1900; and Gray's *Fatal Sisters*.) — 59. **Ale-spilling fray**. Literally " ale-bereavement," — reminiscent of the wild oversetting of tankards and spilling of ale when the hall was suddenly attacked. For famous Germanic hall-fights see the close of the *Nibelungenlied* (Needler's translation), the Old English *Finnsburg Fragment* (Gummere's *Oldest English Epic*), and the fine Eddic lay of *Hamthir*, where there is a vivid picture of an " ealu-scerwen," an ale-spilling:

> " There was tumult in the hall, the tankards were upset.
> The men lay in blood that mingled with beer."

11. — 94. **Point would not pierce**, etc. " Spells " which protected those who knew them, against injury, were familiar to our Germanic ancestors. See *Charm against a Sudden Stitch*, and note. Later, Beowulf's sword refuses to bite on the body of Grendel's mother. She was spelled against all swords but her own, and it is with this that Beowulf finally kills her. In the *Njals Saga* (Chap. 30), Hallgrim has a sword " which he had made by seething spells; and this is what the spells say, that no weapon shall give him his death-blow save that sword. When a man is to be slain by that sword, something sings in it so loudly that it may be heard a long way off." This belief in " spells " and charmed weapons lasted a long time. Macbeth smiles at swords and laughs weapons to scorn, because he thinks he has been spelled against them by the witches, and when he meets Macduff, he says:

> Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
> *I bear a charmed life.*"

For charmed weapons, cf. *Faerie Queene*, Bk. I, Canto IV, stanza 50.

12. — 124. **This token they saw**. Beowulf probably hung his battle-trophy on some projection above the door on the outside of the hall; for later we are told that Hrothgar sees it as he is standing on the steps outside. For an interesting

Norse parallel see the *Icelandic Saga of Grettir the Strong*, Chaps. 35 and 36. (Translated by Magnusson and Morris.) In this story the hero fights a cat-monster. "The men of Bard-dale say that day dawned on her while they wrestled, and that she burst when he cut the arm from her." The parallels are probably due to a modification and domestication of the Grendel story in Iceland. Cf. also the Danish saga of *Bodvar Bjarki* (Lawrence, *Mod. Lang. Publ.*, June 1909, pp. 220 sq.).

The Fight with Grendel's Mother

13. — 15. **Where mountain torrents**, etc. Professor Gummere compares Kubla Khan:

> "Where Alph the sacred river ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea."

14. — 42. **To each of us here the end must come**, etc. See note on *Widsith*, p. 5.

15. — 67. **Caves of the nicors.** Sea-monsters, variously interpreted; here probably the walrus (whale-horse). Vigfusson's Icelandic dictionary defines them as "fabulous water goblins, mostly appearing in the shape of a gray water-horse." The word is common Germanic. In modern English Old Nick has become a land-lubber and got mixed up with Nicholas. From the German feminine form, we get "nixy." Matthew Arnold's *Neckan* is from the Swedish "næcken." See *Cent. Dict.* "Nick" and "nicker." — 81. **They saw in the water sea-snakes**, etc. Cf. the fine assortment of sea-monsters in the *Faerie Queene*, Bk. II, Canto XII, 22–25:

> "Spring headed Hydras and sea-shouldering whales
> Great whirlpooles which all fishes make to flee;
> Bright Scolopendræs arm'd with silver scales;
> Mighty Monoceroses with immeasured tayles.
> The dreadful Fish that hath deserved the name
> Of Death, and like him lookes in dreadfull hew;
> *The griesly Wasserman, that makes his game*
> *The flying ships with swiftness to pursew;*

The horrible Sea-Satyre, that doth shew
His fearfull face in time of greatest storme;
Huge Ziffius, whom Mariners eschew
No less then rockes, (as travellers informe)
And greedy Rosmarines with visages deforme."

— 86. **Sudden they fled.** So, in the *Faerie Queene*, when the palmer smote the sea with his staff,

" all that dreadful armie fast gan fly
Into great Tethys bosome, where they hidden lye."

16. — 120. **Swiftly he sank**, etc. In the story of Grettir, the hero fights a giant in a cave under a waterfall. It is clearly a reminiscence of Beowulf's adventure. " Then Grettir dived under the force (waterfall), and hard work it was, because the whirlpool was strong, and he had to dive down to the bottom before he might come up under the force, and the river fell over it from the sheer rocks. He went up into the cave, and there was a great fire flaming from amidst of brands; and there he saw a giant sitting withal, marvellously great, and dreadful to look on. . . . And the giant was fain to reach for a sword that hung up there in the cave; but therewithal Grettir smote him afore into the breast, and smote off well-nigh all the breast, bone and belly, so that the bowels tumbled out of him and fell into the river, and were driven down along the stream; and as the priest (who has been holding a rope for Grettir to pull himself up by) sat by the rope, he saw certain fibres all covered with blood swept down the swirls of the stream; then . . . he thought for sure that Grettir was dead, and got him home. But Grettir went up the cave, after he had killed the giant, and kindled a light, and espied the cave. The story tells not how much he got therein, but it must have been something great."

17. — 134. **Though eager to smite her, his arm was helpless.** So in the story of Grettir: " She held him to her so hard that he might turn his hands to no account save to keep fast hold on the middle of the witch." — 146. **Sang on her**

head the hard-forged blade. The sword in Germanic Epic has a well-marked personality. It has its proper name, its pedigree and history, its runic inscription on the hilt, with the name of the maker. It was faithful to its owner, or on occasion it failed him like a traitor, as here. Often it encouraged him, and spurred him on to do his best. It drank the blood from the wound in battle-gulps, and sang its war-song wild on the head of the foe. Oaths were sworn on the sword, and if a sword-oath is broken, the blade will not bite but on the owner's head. Swords were among the most precious heirlooms handed down from father to son. "They were not inanimate tools of war, but seemed alive, endowed with supernatural powers, witnesses and symbols of the most important transactions of life, intimate comrades in the hour of need." (Uhland.) — Moreover, every sword had its own peculiar ring, by which it could be recognized, like the sound of the human voice. In the story of Offa (see Uhland's ballad, *Der Blinde, Kœnig*, and *Saxo*, V, 4, p. 96), the blind old king, Wermund, listening to a dual combat between his son and a Viking chief, recognizes the triumphant voice of his old sword, and knows that his son is victorious. — 148. **Battle-flasher.** A fine kenning for the sword. As Uhland points out (*Deutsche Heldensage*), swords were often named for their light-giving power. Valhalla was lighted by swords. In the Finnsburg fragment, during a night-attack upon the hall, the "sword-light flashed as though all Finnsburg were on fire." — 163. **The murderous hag by the hair he caught.** The Ms. reads *eaxle* = shoulder, emended by Sweet to *feaxe* = hair, which improves both the sense and the alliteration.

18. — 175. **All had been over with Ecgtheow's son.** A desperate attempt on the part of the Christian poet to hold the balance between the providence of God and the prowess of the hero. Yet the passage is quite in keeping with the sentiment of line 572: "Wyrd will often deliver an undoomed earl, if his courage is good."

19. — 208. **The lifeless body sprang from the blows,** etc.

Not an act of wanton revenge, but probably in order to prevent Grendel's double or ghost from haunting the hall.

20. — 243. **Swift to the shore came lustily swimming.** Swimming and diving were accomplishments of every able warrior in the North. " He could swim like a seal, " says the *Njals Saga* of a certain hero. One of Beowulf's youthful adventures was a great swimming match out on the open sea with Brecca. Five days and nights he battled with the waves, and with his naked sword slew the nicors that beset him. In the passage referring to the fight in which Hygelac was killed (ll. 2354–2372), Beowulf is said to have escaped by swimming, loaded down with his booty of thirty suits of armor!

Beowulf's Last Fight and Death

The story of the dragon and treasure are common motives of Germanic Epic. See the tale of Sigurd and Fafnir, in the *Volsunga Saga*, on which Wagner has based his Sigfrid-drama.

22. — 29. **Uprose with his shield.** Probably an old Epic formula. So in the Latin Waltharius (see Scheffel's *Ekkehard*), the hero " in clipeum surgit."

23. — 57. **As the worm coiled back.** " Worm " is the native Germanic word for dragon. — 60. **The shield of iron**, etc. A difficult passage, which none of the translators have made clear. I take the verb " wealdan " to refer to the shield, and by supplying the pronoun " his " or " him " (*i.e.* the shield) as object of " wealdan," to wield, we get the following sense: Beowulf, having a brand-new iron shield, had a right to expect that it would last longer than it did, seeing that he wielded (it) for the first time (*forman dogore*), on that occasion (*þy fyrste*).

24. — 89. **Fled to the wood.** For a parallel situation, and reproach of the cowards, see the *Battle of Maldon*, p. 89, l. 169. The speech of Ælfwinė (*Maldon*, ll. 195 sq.) closely echoes that of Wiglaf, and illustrates the Germanic trait of loyalty to the leader which Tacitus had noted long ago (*Germania*, Chap. 14):

" Base it is for the followers (*comitatus*) not to equal the courage of the leader; but infamous and disgraced for the rest of his life is he who returns from the battle surviving his lord." — 92. **Wiglaf his name**. Wiglaf was a kinsman of Beowulf (see Beowulf's last speech, l. 283), and therefore doubly bound to stand by his lord.

26. — 157. **Broken was Nægling**. The name of Beowulf's sword. Other famous sword-names were Hrunting (thruster), the sword Unferth gave to Beowulf; Miming, the sword Wayland the smith made for Sigurd according to the *Thidreks-saga;* Balmung, Sigfried's sword in the *Nibelungenlied*. See note on p. 17, 146. — 160. **His hand was too heavy**. Saxo tells the same thing of Offa. No sword was of such stiffness that he did not shiver it at the first stroke into many pieces, " crebra partium fractione dissolveret! " See also *Volsunga Saga*, Chap. XV, Sigurd's sword-test. — 175. **Thrust from below**, etc. The dragons of Germanic folklore have scaly backs that no sword may pierce, and can only be killed from below. In the *Volsunga Saga*, Sigurd kills the dragon Fafnir by digging a pit in his path and stabbing him from below.

27. — 193. **Work of the giants**. Tacitus says that the Teutons abhorred stone walls. To the Angles and Saxons who invaded England in the fifth and sixth centuries, accustomed as they were to wooden halls of the Heorot type, the remnants of Roman architecture were " Giants' work." " Castles are seen from afar, reared by giants they rise in the land, wondrous walls of masonry," say the *Gnomic Verses* (see p. 75). The word translated " castles " is the Roman *castra*. — 195. **Upheld that hill-vault**, etc. Literally " earth-house." This name is said to be still applied in Scotland to the underground structures known as Picts' houses. See " earth-house," *Cent. Dict.*

28. — 230. **Bore his battle-net in**. " Battle-net " is a kenning for corslet, and the whole is an Epic phrase for " advanced." The corslet of ring-mail was composed of small fine

iron rings which were so arranged that every ring was interlocked with four others. A complete corslet of this kind, found at Vimoor (Funen), was made up of about 20,000 rings, and it is estimated that it must have taken a man something like a year to make it. Like the sword, the corslet was a valued heirloom, and Beowulf leaves his own to Wiglaf at his death. (See fig. 6 in Clark Hall's *Beowulf*.) — 232. **Many a sun-bright jewel he saw.** Dragon-guarded treasure played a great rôle in Germanic folklore. The best known is the famous Nibelungen hoard won by Sigfried when he kills the dragon. The towering banner, with gold inwoven, may be a reminiscence of a legionary standard left behind in the hurried withdrawal of the Roman garrisons under Honorius, 410 A.D. The military standard of the Roman emperors consisted of a staff or lance carrying a purple banner on a cross-bar. The banner usually bore the effigy of the emperor. But Constantine, who, it will be remembered, was crowned at York, after his conversion to Christianity placed upon it, woven in gold, the mystic monogram consisting of the Greek letter X(=Ch) and P(=R), standing for "Christ." (For a detailed description of the Labarum, see Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, quoted in Cook's *Christ*, p. 190.) It is far from improbable that some such standard, hidden away with other Roman treasure, was discovered by Anglian invaders of the North of England.

29. — 277. **Beowulf's Barrow.** So Achilles had his tomb "high on a jutting headland over wide Hellespont, that it might be seen from afar off the sea by men that now are and by those that shall be hereafter." (*Odyssey*, Book 24, Butcher and Lang's translation.) — 290. **To find the reward of the faithful.** A Christian touch out of keeping with what Beowulf has just said about Wyrd sweeping away the last of his line to the land of doom. For a similar mingling of the Christian and the old Germanic mood in contemplating the hereafter, see the close of the Gnomic verse from the Cotton Ms., p. 77.

III. BIBLICAL EPIC

Fall of Man

The selection given in the text comprises the greater part of the so-called *Younger Genesis* (*Genesis B*), a fragment of some 600 lines in ninth or tenth century West Saxon. This fragment is found imbedded in the West Saxon version of an older Northumbrian poem on the same subject, and was probably inserted to fill a gap in the Ms. of the older poem (*Genesis A*). Owing to certain peculiarities of diction and structure, Professor Sievers in 1875 argued that this interpolation, which he called *Genesis B*, was translated into the West Saxon from a continental Old Saxon original. The subsequent discovery (1894) of fragments of this Old Saxon original in the Vatican Library at Rome brilliantly verified the hypothesis of Professor Sievers. My colleague, Professor G. H. Gerould, suggests (*M. L. N.* May 1911) that a copy of the Old Saxon poem was brought to England by a certain Saxon clerk who came from Liege, and was in the service of Archbishop Dunstan and his successor, and who wrote the first biography of Dunstan, signing himself B. If this hypothesis be correct, we must assign to the *Younger Genesis* a date somewhat after 970, which is considerably later than that usually given.

In the same Ms. with the *Genesis* (*A* and *B*) are found poems and poetic paraphrases of other portions of the Biblical narrative, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, *The Temptation of Christ*, etc. This interesting Ms., containing contemporary illustrations, is now kept in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Its contents were first published in 1655 as *Cædmon's Paraphrase* by the Dutch scholar Junius, who was under the impression that he had discovered the poems attributed by Bede to Cædmon. (See Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. IV, Chap. 24, Temple Classics ed.) Modern scholarship has proved this assumption unwarranted, and none of the poems of the Junius Ms. are now ascribed to Cædmon.

As Junius was a friend of Milton's, it is not at all unlikely that he acquainted the author of *Paradise Lost* with the Old English poem on the *Fall of Man*. On this question see Masson's *Life of Milton*, 6, 557 note. Stopford Brooke, *E. E. L.*, Chap. XV, p. 281, and Chaps. XVI and XVII, for parallels between Milton and the Old English *Genesis*. Also A. S. Cook, "Milton and Cædmon," *Academy*, 34, 420.

The Old English *Fall of Man*, with all its crudities and wearying repetitions, is full of dramatic vigor, and shows considerable skill in characterization and handling of motive.

30. — 1. **The Ruler of Hosts**, etc. Note how the conception of the Germanic *comitatus* underlies this portrayal. God is pictured as leader and overlord rather than as creator; he bestows power and is the giver of treasure; his bounty is the source of endowments physical and mental. — 7. He **dowered them all**, etc. The Old Saxon poet is characterized by his fondness for lines of redundant beats, the "Schwellvers," as Professor Sievers calls it. I have tried to give the effect of this by the use of five and six beat lines with medial pause. — 11. **His lord he was bound to serve.** As the chief virtue of the lord is generosity, the chief duty of the thane is loyalty. By emphasizing these Germanic motives, the Saxon poet puts Satan in the wrong at the very outset, whereas Milton's first portrait of the rebel angel tempts us to sympathy if not admiration. No Germanic audience would have felt anything but unmixed disapproval of a disloyal thane, no matter how fine his spirit.

31. — 30. **In the North and West.** In Talmudic tradition the North was the region of the demons, the East of God, the South of the Angels, and the West of Man. In *Gen. A* Satan strives with God to possess a home and high-seat in the North. In l. 339 Eve says: "I can see where He sits himself, — 'tis South and East — the world's creator." In Cynewulf's *Crist* (see p. 481, 34) the Saviour appears on Judgment Day in the South and East. Cf. Milton's "Homeward with flying march, where we possess *the quarters of the North*," *Paradise Lost*, V,

688. In *Henry VI*, Pt. I, V, Sc. 3, Satan is called "Monarch of the North." For a fine poetical rendering of this tradition, see Stephen Hawker's *Quest of the Sangrail*, pp. 178–180. (*Poetical Works* of R. S. Hawker. John Lane, London and New York, 1899.)

32. — 64. **Ever fire or frost.** So Milton:

> "the parching air
> Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire."

(See the whole passage, *Paradise Lost*, II, 594–603.)

33. — 81. **This narrow place is nothing like**, etc.

> "Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
> Said then the lost archangel, this the seat
> That we must change for heaven," etc.
>
> — *Paradise Lost*, I, 243.

— 96. **But iron bonds are all about me.** The illustrated Ms. shows Satan held fast in the mouth of hell, which is pictured as a dragon. Compare with Satan's speech the argument of Beelzebub in *Paradise Lost*, II.

34. — 135. **If any there be whom erst I favored.** Again the Germanic stress on the duty of the thane to repay in time of need the generosity of his lord. Cf. Wiglaf's speech, *Beowulf*, p. 24, and *Battle of Maldon*, l. 195. The conception of sending a substitute for Satan because he himself is unable to go seems original with the Old Saxon poet. Milton makes Satan undertake the journey himself.

35. — 142. **Don his feather-robe, fly through the air.** The feather-robe or suit of wings is familiar to Germanic mythology. When Smith Wayland, the Germanic Vulcan, was hamstrung by his foe to prevent his escape, he donned his feather-robe and flew out through the smoke-hole of his smithy. Avitus, a Latin poet of the fourth century who wrote a poem on the Fall of Man, and whose work the Old Saxon poet may have known, ascribes to Satan the power of changing into beast or bird:

> "Alitis interdum subito mentita volantis
> Fit species."

— 160. Set **helmet on head.** The West-Saxon has *hæle - helm, i.e.* hero-helmet, but Koegel suggests that the Old Saxon read *heliþ-helm, i.e.* helmet of concealment, the " tarn-kappe," or cap of invisibility of Germanic folklore. In the *Heliand*, an Old Saxon alliterative poem on the life of Christ, the Devil wears his " helith-helm " to deceive men. — 163. **He mounted aloft**, etc. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, II, 927:

> " At last his sail-broad vans
> He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
> Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league
> As in a cloudy chair ascending rides,"

and contrast the music of Milton's interlinked alliterations with the hammer-blow style of the Anglo-Saxon.

36. — 203. **In the shape of a serpent.** The Old English word is " worm," the same used for the dragon in *Beowulf*. The " worm " of Germanic folklore is a dragon or serpent monster.

38. — 253. **Far from the East.** See note on 31 — 30.

41. — 366. **Yet did she it all in duty and love.** The old poet saves the character of Eve and enlists our pity for her. How different from Milton's Eve, compact of vanity and shallow deceitfulness! (*Paradise Lost*, V, 816 ff.) In the Old English poem Adam yields from utter weariness, a very human touch. Milton makes him eat

> " Against his better knowledge, not deceived
> But fondly overcome with female charm."

41. — 380. **He laughed aloud and leaped for joy.** Contrast with this exultant note, Milton's " Back to the thicket slunk the guilty serpent."

The Drowning of the Egyptians

The *Exodus* is one of the poems found in the Junius Ms. Its date is unknown, but it is certainly much older than the *Younger Genesis*, and was probably composed in Northumbria. It contains 589 lines, and the translated passage fairly illustrates the descriptive vigor of the poem, its imaginative inten-

sity and vividness of phrase, and also the variation and repetition so characteristic of Old English verse. While long stretches of verse in the Junius Ms. are mere alliterative paraphrase of the Bible story, the *Exodus* stands out as an independent poem, created by the imagination of the unknown author out of the Old Testament narrative. For a literary appreciation, see Stopford Brooke, *E. E. L.*, pp. 315–324. For a brief, critical discussion of the problems involved, see Professor F. A. Blackburn's introduction to his edition of *Exodus and Daniel* in the Belles Lettres Series (D. C. Heath and Co., 1907). The *Exodus* presents unusual difficulties to the translator. This is not the place to justify the renderings adopted. Students of Old English should compare Professor Blackburn's notes on the passage.

44. — 53. When the dark upheaval o'erwhelmed them all. This rendering is based on Professor Blackburn's emendation of a corrupt passage in the text. Professor Blackburn translates: "Then on them fell the hugest of wild waves, dark with its towering mass."

IV. CHRISTIAN LYRIC

CÆDMON

Northumbrian Hymn

The familiar story of Cædmon, the shepherd poet of Whitby, is told by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Bk. 4, Chap. 24, Temple Classics). Cædmon began to compose poetry about 670, and the Northumbrian hymn in all probability represents his first attempt at sacred song. A peculiar interest therefore attaches to this hymn, because it is the first passage of English poetry whose date and authorship are definitely known. The original Northumbrian version of the hymn is preserved in an old Ms. of Bede's history, and was copied there about 737. We give the original Northumbrian verses below, as a speci-

men of the oldest form of English verse, — older than the West Saxon version of the *Beowulf*.

" Nu scylun hergan hefænricas uard,
metudæs mæcti end his modgidanc,
uerc uuldur-fadur, swe he uundra gihuæs
eci dryctin or astelidæ.
He aerist scop ælda barnum
heben til hrofe haleg scepen;
tha middungeard moncynnes uard,
eci dryctin æfter tiadæ
firum foldan, frea allmectig.
Primo cantauit Cædmon istud carmen."

CYNEWULF

Hymn of Praise

The *Hymn of Praise* is taken from Cynewulf's *Crist*, Part I, ll. 347–377. The *Crist* is a poem of three parts in which are celebrated the Advent, the Ascension, and the Second Coming of Christ (Doomsday). There is in the Old Saxon dialect a poem called the *Heliand*, Saviour (German, *Heiland*), probably by the same writer who composed the *Younger Genesis*, which presents the life of Christ in narrative form on the background of Germanic manners and customs, in the style of the old Germanic Epic. The *Crist*, on the other hand, is a series of essentially lyric poems, based on the antiphones, hymns, and homilies of the Latin Church. " We must conceive of Cynewulf as so thrilled by the sweet and solemn chanting of the greater Antiphones of Advent . . . that he gladly yielded to the impulse to reproduce them in English under the form of variations. . . . He abridged, expanded, suppressed, or transferred, as his genius suggested, freely interpolated matter from other sources, and welded the whole together by closing with a magnificent doxology." (A. S. Cook, *Introduction to Crist*, p. XLII. Albion Series, Ginn and Co.) The personal, lyric note predominates in

Cynewulf's *Crist*, and the rough music of the old alliterative verse is softened to express the new emotions of a personal religion. The passages from the *Crist* are especially notable as affording an early instance of that liturgic genius of the English language which finds its fullest expression in the Book of Common Prayer.

Near the close of the second part of *Crist*, the name "Cynewulf" is woven into the verse in runic characters. The same name, similarly signed, is found in three other poems, *Elene*, *Juliana*, and *The Fates of the Apostles*, all of them based on Latin saints' legends. For a translation of all these signed passages, see Professor Cook's introduction to the *Dream of the Rood* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1905). In a passage of the *Elene* (ll. 1237–1257) immediately preceding the runic insertion the poet gives some account of himself from which we gather that he was at the time an old man, and that he had undergone a deep religious experience, as a result of which his spirit, previously fettered by sin, found peace, and was inspired to sacred song. He was probably a Northumbrian, and lived at the end of the eighth century. Many other poems besides the ones above mentioned have been ascribed to Cynewulf, among them the *Phœnix* and the *Dream of the Rood*, or *Vision of the Cross*, both of which are represented in the translations. Though neither of these poems is signed, there is good reason for thinking they are by Cynewulf. For a survey of Cynewulf criticism, and a summary of its results, see Professor Cook's introduction to his edition, quoted above, and Dr. C. W. Kennedy's introduction to *Cynewulf's Poems translated into English Prose* (Swan, Sonnenschein, London, 1910). For a new interpretation of the rune passage in *Elene*, see Dr. Brown's article, *M. L. N.*

The Voyage of Life

These lines are based on the following passage of Gregory's homily on the Ascension: "But let hope, as an anchor of the soul fixed within the heavenly country whither Jesus our

forerunner is entered, hold us steadfast amid the fluctuations of this mortal life." Our selection is typical of the way in which Cynewulf expands and makes poetry out of his Latin originals.

Doomsday

This passage is from *Crist*, Part III, ll. 867–874; 878–909; 972–1006. Many of the hymns and homilies of the Latin Church dealt with the Last Judgment, and the subject was a favorite one with the Old English writers. Compare the well-known hymn *Dies irae, dies illa*. Cynewulf was probably familiar with an alphabetic hymn quoted by Bede, beginning thus:

" Apparebit repentina, dies magna domini
fur obscura velut nocte improvisos occupans."

(Suddenly shall appear the great day of the Lord, like a thief in the night falling on the unsuspecting.)

" Clangor tubae per quaternas terrae plagas concinens
vivos una mortuosque Christo ciet obviam."

(The blast of the trumpet, sounding through the four quarters of the earth, shall call before Christ the living and the dead.) Professor Cook prints the whole hymn in his introduction to the *Crist*, p. 171, and quotes Stopford Brooke: " This trumpet voice of the heart belongs to the English nature, and the lofty music of Milton's praise came down to him in legitimate descent from the earliest exultations of English psalm."

48. — 36. **From South and East**, etc. See note on l. 30 of the *Fall of Man*.

The Vision of the Cross

The Vision of the Cross, generally called the *Dream of the Rood*, is found in the " Vercelli Book," a Ms. collection of Old English verse and prose, mostly religious in character, discovered in the cathedral library of Vercelli, Italy, in 1822. The authorship of the *Vision* is unknown, but there are strong

reasons for believing that Cynewulf wrote it. The *Elene*, one of Cynewulf's signed poems, is inspired by the story of Constantine's famous vision of the cross; and the discovery of the true cross by Constantine's mother Helena (Elene) forms the main subject of that poem. In the personal passage referred to above (see note on *Crist*), Cynewulf says:

> "Not once but often within me I pondered
> The Cross of Glory, ere I came to unfold
> The marvel rare of the radiant tree
> As I found it in books in the fulness of time,
> Writ to reveal the victory-token" (ll. 1252–1257).

Even if we do not interpret these words as a direct reference to the *Vision*, as some critics have done, the personal note in the *Vision of the Cross* is so close to that revealed in the personal passages of the *Crist* and the *Elene*, that it is difficult to believe that Cynewulf did not write this tenderest and most deeply felt of Old English religious poems. For a convenient review of the authorship problem, see Professor Cook's edition (*Dream of the Rood*, Clarendon Press, 1905), and Dr. Kennedy's introduction to the *Poems of Cynewulf*, pp. 62–68. The dramatic personification of inanimate objects is a common device in Old English poetry. Cf. *The Riddles* and *The Husband's Message*.

Apart from its literary value, a peculiar interest attaches to the Vision of the Cross because some lines of the poem are inscribed in runic characters on the Ruthwell Cross, an ancient monumental stone, still preserved at Ruthwell in Annandale, near the Scottish border. On the general subject of Old English Cross Literature, see *The Cross in the Life and Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, by W. O. Stevens (*Yale Studies*, XXIII, Henry Holt and Co.).

50. — 1. **List to the words of a wondrous vision.** Compare the vision of Constantine: "About midday, when the sun was beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light, in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription: Conquer by this." (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Bk. I, Chap. 28. The whole passage will be found translated

in Cook's edition of the *Crist*, p. 190.) Cynewulf alludes to this vision of Constantine in *Elene*, ll. 68–85. There is a similar Cross vision at the close of the *Crist*, ll. 1083 sq. — 9. **'Twas no gallows-tree.** In the Old English, as in the other Germanic dialects, the word " gallows " was also used to signify the cross. See *Cent. Dict.*, " Gallows." In form the T-shaped St. Anthony's cross closely resembled a gallows.

51. — 28. **Many years ago**, etc. A portion of the *Vision* is in the longer alliterative line also appearing in the *Younger Genesis*. As the expanded lines predominate in the narrative portions, and the shorter lines in the lyric portions, I have used the lines of different length to mark this distinction throughout. — 38. **Then stripped the mighty hero.** The heroic note comes out strong here. The voluntary character of the sacrifice of Christ, emphasized by the Latin Church writers, appealed to the Germanic mind. Yet, curiously enough, in the *Heliand* it is not found, — we have mere paraphrase at this point. See also Milton's

> " Most perfect hero tried in heaviest plight
> Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight."
> — *The Passion*, 13, 14.

On the Ruthwell Cross are found the words in runic characters " [Un] clothed Himself God Almighty, when He would mount the cross, courageous in the sight of all men." For a description of the Ruthwell Cross, and a literal rendering of three other passages from the *Vision*, inscribed thereon, see Cook and Tinker, *Translations from Old English Poetry* (Ginn and Co., 1903), pp. 100–102. —43. **I stood, a cross uplifted.** Literally, " A Rood was I upreared." Professor Cook quotes from a Middle English poem of the thirteenth century to show how this alliterative formula persisted:

> " High upon a down
> there all folk it see may
> A mile from the town
> about the midday
> *The rood is up areared*

His friends are afeared
and clingeth to the clay.
The rood stands in stone
Mary stands alone
and saith ' Welaway.' "

—43. **The King of Glory I carried.** A cross preserved in the Cathedral of Brussels, and said to contain fragments of the true cross, has an Old English inscription of two lines apparently taken from the *Vision:*

" Cross am I called, the King long since
Trembling I bore, with blood besprent."

53. — 66. **Chanted a lay of mourning.** The same phrase is used in the description of Beowulf's burial, where the comrades of the hero circle about his barrow in solemn procession and say that

" He was mildest of men and most beloved
Kindest of Kings, and keenest for honor."

All but the last phrase might have been used in the chant of mourning at Christ's grave, but the necessary elimination of that last epithet, " keenest for honor," shows the difference between the old Germanic and the Christian ideal. According to the latter, " fame " is " the last infirmity of noble mind," whereas the virtues of Beowulf culminate in his eagerness for fame. — 69. **Long I stood**, etc. The Ms. is defective at this point, and the translation compresses several lines into one. In the original it is " we " stood, " we " were felled, " we," were buried, etc. The crosses of the malefactors are meant, which according to the legend were found by the side of the cross of Christ by Helena. — 87. At this point ll. 91–121 of the original are omitted. They are far inferior to the rest of the poem, and read like a homiletic interpolation.

54. — 108. **May He who suffered**, etc. The last five lines of our version represent, but are hardly a translation of, ll. 144–156 of the original. The conditions under which Old English poetry was transmitted make it only too probable that interpolations and additions by inferior hands often mar

the original. The translator whose aim it is to be faithful to the spirit of the original has a right to exercise a freedom not permissible were he editing the original text. He is certainly under no obligation to perpetuate in modern verse the maunderings of pious but prosy scribes, or to play Titania to the poetical brayings of long-eared monkish Bottoms. Of the lines in question the Clarendon Press editor of the *Dream of the Rood* says: "The conclusion . . . is in quite a different manner, and seems alien to the prevailing sentiment of the poem. It is cool and objective in tone, and has no necessary vital relation to what has preceded. Pending further elucidation, we can only conclude that it has either come here by accident, or that the poet's judgment was at fault. The poem should have ended with 148 *a*, or perhaps better with 146."

The Phœnix

The *Phœnix* is a poem of 677 lines, preserved in the Exeter Book. The translation gives ll. 1–264, and ll. 570–677. The poem is unsigned, but has many of the characteristics of Cynewulf's style. For a summary of critical opinion on the question of authorship, see Cook's introduction to Cynewulf's *Crist*, p. LXIII, and Kennedy's introduction to his prose translation of Cynewulf's poems, pp. 56–62. The *Phœnix* is based on a Latin poem by Lactantius, (*ca.* 300 A.D.), who has been called the Christian Cicero. (The Latin poem is printed in Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, Appendix I.) It is known that the works of Lactantius were in the library at York, and Cynewulf may have read the Latin poem there. The story of the Phœnix, which rises again from its own ashes, was a favorite theme of the early Christian writers, and was interpreted by them as a symbol of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. "This allegorical treatment of the life of beasts and birds, and also of the great tales of the world; the taking up of the whole of natural history into the realm of the spiritual — human thoughts and emotions being imputed to animals — is of great antiquity, and especially among the Semi-

tic peoples; through the Old Testament, through the Talmud, through the parables of Christ, it descended to the early Christian writers . . . . Ambrose, for example, uses the phœnix as the symbol of the resurrection." Stopford Brooke, *E. E. L.* In a collection of a hundred Latin riddles, ascribed to Symphosius, there is the following on the Phœnix:

> "Vita mihi mors est, si coepero nasci
> Sed prius est fatum leti quam lucis origo;
> Sic solus manes ipsos mihi dico parentes."

(Death is life to me, if I begin to be born. But first comes the fate of dissolution, before the beginning of life. Thus I am alone in giving the name of parents to my ancestral shades.) The first part of the poem relates the fable of the Phœnix, after Lactantius, but the 170 lines of the original are expanded into 380 in the Old English version. The second part, containing the Christian interpretation and application of the fable, is the English poet's own addition. Though inspired by his Latin original, the vividness and beauty of the landscape belong largely to the Old English poet, and the fervors of Christian joy and hope are entirely his. The *Phœnix* is interesting as one of the earliest examples in English literature of ideal landscape. Contrast in this respect the landscape in *Beowulf*, and compare with the landscape in the *Pearl*.

55. — 24. **No hill-sides steep nor hollows deep.** Examples of this sort of rime combined with alliteration are not uncommon in Old English verse. Lines 15–16 of the *Phœnix* read:

> "Ne forstes fnæst, ne fyres blæst
> Ne hægles hryre, ne hrimes dryre."

This complicated form was common in Old Norse poetry. There is in the Exeter Book an Old English poem of 87 lines, the so-called rime-poem, composed in this fashion.

58. — 134. **Harmonies clear of organ-pipes.** Organs were introduced into church-worship in England by Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, toward the close of the seventh century. —136. **Music of the swan.** Literally "the

feathers of the swan." The Anglo-Saxons believed that the music of the swan was made, not with its voice, but with its feathers, as the wind swept through them. One of the Old English riddles describes this in striking fashion:

> "My robe is silent when I rest on earth
> Or run by the shore, or ruffle the pools;
> But oft on my pinions upward I mount,
> Skyward borne on the buoyant air,
> High o'er the haunts and houses of men
> Faring afar with the fleeting clouds.
> Then sudden my feathers are filled with music.
> They sing in the wind, as clear I sail
> O'er wave and wood, a wandering sprite."

The words describing the sound of the singing feathers, are the same in the *Phœnix* passage, and in the riddle. The Latin poem has "olor moriens," in allusion to the fabled song of the dying swan. — 150. **Worn with winters a thousand**. The Germanic peoples counted years by winters, and days by nights. The phrase is therefore equivalent to "a thousand years old." Cf. *Beowulf*, p. 16, l. 124.

61. — 239. **Taint of sin all taken away**. Literally "sundered from sin." This does not seem to fit into bird-physiology, but is an anticipation of the Christian application. — 240. **Like as when men**, etc. This is one of the few elaborate similes found in Anglo-Saxon literature.

62. — 262. **A Man of God**, etc. An allusion to Job xix: 26, "And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." In l. 549 of the original, express mention is made of the "sayings of Job" (the word is *giedding*, a proverbial saying in alliterative speech, something to be quoted and handed down). Then follows, ll. 552–569, a free paraphrase of the Vulgate version of Job xix: 25–27. — 277. **To the land of delight**. "The popular consciousness of the Anglo-Saxons assimilated the idea of the Kingdom of heaven under the old epic figure of the tribal family-seat, the ancestral homestead, *eþel*, *eard*. Neither of the chief Old German religious poems *Otfrid* and *Heliand* nationalized the conception of the life here-

after. To the poet of the *Heliand* it is a world of light which he is unable to picture in detail. (See also the emphasis on light as a characteristic of Heaven in the *Younger Genesis* of Old Saxon origin, *J. D. S.*) Only the Anglo Saxons created a genuine religious epic, a body of Christian poetry steeped in the popular consciousness of the Anglo-Saxon people" (*Ehrisman, Zum Germanischen Früh Christentum, Beitræge*, Vol. 35. 1909).

64. — 359. **Leave hath granted us lucis auctor.** The *Phœnix* poet, at the close of his poem, has adopted the peculiar device of linking together by means of alliteration Anglo-Saxon and Latin half-lines. In order to give the effect of this, the Latin half-lines have been retained in the translation. Rendered into English the passage reads: "Leave hath granted us the author of light, that here we might merit, by good deeds gain, joys in heaven; that so we men might reach the greatest kingdom, and sit in exalted seats, live in delight of light and peace; enter our home of blessed happiness, in bliss immortal; see our Saviour, without ending, merciful and mild; prolong his praises with laud everlasting, in bliss with the angels. Alleluia."

V. SECULAR LYRIC AND ELEGY

The Wanderer

The elegiac note, so characteristic of Old English poetry, finds its most poetic expression in *The Wanderer*. "Wyrd bið ful aræd," all unavoided is the doom of destiny, — this is the keynote of the poem. There is only a faint suggestion of the Christian hope in the first two lines. Over the body of the poem lie the shadows of fatalism, and a profound sense of the instability of the earth and its joys. *The Wanderer* is preserved in the Exeter Book, and probably belongs to the first quarter of the eighth century. For a discussion of the critical problems involved, see W. W. Lawrence, *Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. IV, 1902, pp. 460–480, and the forthcoming edition of Old English Lyrics in the Belles Lettres Series.

65. — 5. **Hunted by Wyrd.** A free rendering of the Old English, Wyrd biþ ful aræd, Wyrd shall be fully accomplished. The fact that "Wyrd" and "God's Mercy" are mentioned together is nothing unusual (see *Gnomic Verses*, p. 75, ll. 4 and 5), and there is no need to assume that the introductory lines have been worked over by a Christian editor who had before him an earlier pagan poem. — 9. **Often alone in the dark before dawning.** Cf. the Norse *Lay of Hamdir:*

> "At the sad dawning, . . .
> When day is waxing
> And man's grief awakeneth
> And the sorrow of each one
> The early day quickeneth."
> — Morris' translation.

66. — 23. **Since long time ago my giver of bounty,** etc. For the other side of the picture, see *Widsith.*

67. — 63. The following ten lines in the original text are in the manner of the gnomic verses. Their omission from the English version does not necessarily imply that the translator considers them an interpolation, though their counsels of worldly wisdom, prudence, and a safe mediocrity certainly form a violent interruption to the uniform elegiac mood of the remainder of the poem. If it be objected that this is too subjective a test, the answer is that the value of a book of selections and representative pieces depends after all on the quality of the "subjective taste" with which it is made. Where, as in the present case, there is good reason to doubt that a poem has been transmitted in its original form, the editor and translator, whose aim is literary rather than critical and analytic, has a right to exercise the same judgment in the elimination of parts of poems that he exercises in dealing with the body of Old English poetry. The bracketed figures indicating the elision will enable the critic easily to check the subjectivity of the translator. It should be added that Boer considers the whole passage 57–87 an interpolation; but in this he is influenced by his peculiar theory of the origin of the poem, and its

relation to the *Seafarer*. — 71. **Dead is their revelry, dust are the revellers.** This is the far-heard cry of medieval poetry: " Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere." Cf. Coleridge's

> " The knights are dust, their good swords rust,
> Their souls are with the saints, we trust,"

where the gray monotone of the Old English elegiac mood is overlaid with the colors of romantic medievalism. — 73. **Some have gone down in ships on the sea.** Literally: One did a bird carry off over the deep sea. I have followed Thorpe and Wuelker in interpreting " fugel " as " ship," though I am by no means convinced that the old poet may not have had in mind the same picture as Kipling:

> " Yes, the large birds o' prey
> They will carry us away
> An' you'll never see your soldier any more."

— 84. **Where is the warrior, where is the war-horse.** A thousand years later Thomas Carlyle expresses the same mood in almost the same words: " That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision, a revealed force, nothing more. . . . A little while ago they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not." (*Sartor Resartus*). — 86. **The dream and the gleam that brightened the hall.** " There was gleam and dream," says the Old English poet, in describing the " seledreamas," or joys of the hall. " Dream " in Old English meant joy. The modern sense is probably due to Scandinavian influence.

68. — 103. **All this earth's foundations utterly shall pass.** The classic expression of this mood in English literature is Shakespeare's:

> " The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve,
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind." — *Tempest.*

There follow five lines more in the Exeter Book, comprising a few maxims of practical wisdom, and a conventional Christian exhortation at the close.

The Seafarer

The *Seafarer* is a poem of 124 lines, of unknown date and authorship, preserved in the Exeter Book. It probably belongs to the eighth century. The first part, ll. 1–64, describes the joys and hardships of the seafaring life, and is filled with high poetry. The second part contains practical exhortations, echoed from the gnomic verses, and is full of dreary prose. This second part, omitted in the translation, is almost certainly a later addition, made by one or more monkish scribes. The German scholar Rieger first interpreted the *Seafarer* as a dialogue between an old sailor and a youth eager to go to sea. For the literature on the subject, and the divisions suggested by other critics, see W. W. Lawrence, *Journal of Germanic Philology*, 1902, Vol. IV, p. 461. The assignment of parts as given in our translation differs slightly from that of Rieger. Professor Lawrence agrees with Kluge that the latter portion, ll. 64*b*–124, is a pious appendix, but he tries to prove the first part the "lyric utterance of one man." It is clear that we have in the *Seafarer* the interplay of different and mutually exclusive lyric moods, suggested by life at sea. It is also clear that the same poet felt and expressed both moods, and that one mood is chiefly retrospective, based on experience, and the other prospective, based on anticipation. Whether the poet consciously dramatized these moods into an objective dialogue between an old sailor and a young man is a minor question. When a critic (Boer) says he cannot determine "whether the dialogue is carried on by two persons or whether a single man is talking with himself," we realize how perilously near to vain hair-splitting such a discussion may carry us. The main point is that the poem is lyric, not dramatic; it presents the interplay of lyric moods, and not the conflict of dramatic charac-

ters. The main, and perhaps the only justification for printing the poem in dialogue form is that so far from doing violence to its essential meaning and poetic values, it rather brings these into relief. For a precisely analogous dialogue of moods, compare Walt Whitman's " Give me the Splendid Silent Sun," where the mood inspired by life in the country alternates and conflicts with that inspired by life in the city.

Recently Ehrisman (*Beiträege*, 1909, Vol. 35, p. 212) has argued for a didactic unity of the whole poem. According to this interpretation, the pictures of the seafarer's life, with their contrasts of joy and sorrow, are introduced merely as a symbol of the Christian's life on earth, followed by the joys of heaven. It must be admitted that there is much in Anglo-Saxon Christian poetry to encourage such a view, and I have no doubt that the author of the religious appendix understood the earlier sea-poem in this sense, and appropriated it to his symbolic Christian-mystical purposes, but this is far from proving the unimaginative, unoriginal, unemotional, homiletic addition to have been part of the original fine sea-piece, and in fact its *raison d'être* and final purpose. Browning's sea-piece *Amphibian* is a good example of a genuine blending of the real and the symbolic-mystical, in a uniform poetic key.

68. — 1. **True is the tale**, etc. This line has more alliterations than the strict rule permits.

69. — 11. **Hunger's pangs,** etc. Literally "Hunger from within bit to shreds the courage of me sea-wearied." Cf. *Job.* xviii: 12, " His strength shall be hunger-bitten." — 28. **Little he dreams**, etc. The translation omits the preceding line and a half, where there is an evident break or fault in transcription. — 36. **The tumble and surge of seas tumultuous**, etc. This and the following line are an expansion of the original " hean streamas, sealtyþa gelac," the high seas, and the play of the salt billows.

70. — 68. **Give me the gladness of God's great sea**. I have frankly taken a liberty with the original text here, and the literalist will call my version perversion. Peccavi fortiter!

At this point the homiletic addition is welded on to the genuine poem, and it is done in the following fashion: "As for me the joys of the Lord are more pleasing than this life-in-death, that passeth away on land." From here on to the end, the depth of poetic feeling shoals rapidly, and the rhythm breaks. The sympathetic translator who has felt the heave and lift of the ground-swell under him thus far is tempted to answer the pious homilist with his "dryhtnes dreamas," in Kipling's words:

"Must we sing forever more
On the windless glassy floor
Take back your golden fiddles, and we'll beat to open sea."

The Husband's Message

The somewhat enigmatic character of this poem has given rise to various conjectures. Thorpe, the first editor of the Exeter Book, recognizing the similarity between the opening of the poem and many of the riddles, interpreted the first portion (to l. 13 in the translation), as a separate riddle. Later critics perceived that the lines in question refer to the tablet of wood on which the husband's message is graven. Professor Blackburn (*Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III) makes an ingenious hypothesis connecting riddle 61 of the Exeter Book with the *Husband's Message*, and combines them in his translation under the title *A Love Letter*. Professor Tupper (*Riddles of the Exeter Book*) shows that riddle 61 is a genuine riddle, and that Professor Blackburn's arrangement, while "pretty and ingenious," ignores the true solution of riddle 61 as a reed or reed-flute. In translating the *Husband's Message*, the original text of which is full of gaps, I have been aided by Professor Blackburn's version.

71. — 21. Earnestly urge thee overseas. Old English: lustum læran, þaet þu lagu drefde. Professor Blackburn renders: "Earnestly to urge thee to sail the sea." The next four lines follow Professor Blackburn's version closely. The Old English has:

"siþþan þu gehyrde on hliþes oran
galan geomorne geac on bearwe,
ne læt þy þec siþþan siþes getwæfan,
lade gelettan lifgendne monn."

Literally: "When thou hast heard on the cliff's brow, the mournful cuckoo sing in the grove, do not thou then let living man sunder thee from the journey, hinder thee from going."

72. — 45. In the original there follow five more lines, containing runes which are supposed to be a cipher or password known to the recipient of the letter.

VI. RIDDLES AND GNOMIC VERSE

In the Exeter Book is preserved a collection of some ninety riddles in alliterative verse. These riddles are descriptions or characterizations of objects, from which the object itself, which is not named, must be guessed. When the Old English poet, instead of naming the sea, called it the seals' bath, or instead of naming the ship, called it the ocean-stallion, he resorted to a familiar device of Germanic poetry known as the kenning. Now the Old English riddles are in essence expanded kennings: given the characteristics of an object, to guess what is meant. In the larger number of the riddles the objects are personified and describe themselves, and many of them attain a high degree of literary excellence. Their scope is wide. "Nothing human is deemed too high or low for treatment, and all phases of Old English existence are revealed in these poems; so that they stand out as the most important contemporary contributions to the everyday life of their time." The reading and guessing of riddles of this kind seems to have been a favorite pastime with the Old English, and frequent references to the mead-hall in the riddles themselves make it likely that they were recited there along with lay and ballad. The Old English riddles have their parallels in Latin literature. A collection of one hundred Latin riddles, called the enigmas of Symphosius, was especially popular in England in the seventh

and eighth centuries. Aldhelm (640–707), Bishop of Sherborne, imitated Symphosius in a collection of a hundred riddles in Latin hexameters. A third collection of Latin riddles is partly by Tatwine, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 731, and partly by one Eusebius, of whom nothing is known except that he was an English Churchman and composed sixty enigmas, which with Tatwine's forty, made up the favorite one hundred of the riddle collections. While the riddles of the Exeter Book show the influence of these Latin models, they are in no sense mere imitations, but are full of fresh and close observation of life.

The English riddles, unlike those in the Latin collections, are not supplied with answers, hence their solution has long exercised the ingenuity of students of Old English. While most of them have been satisfactorily solved, the meaning of some is still in doubt. The theory that Cynewulf wrote the riddles has been effectually disproved. While no author is known, they show the workmanship of a single poet, and are not to be viewed as a random collection. For the whole subject of Riddle Literature, and the problems raised by the Old English Riddles, see Professor Tupper's excellent introduction to his edition of the *Riddles of The Exeter Book* (Albion Series, Ginn and Co., 1910).

The Book-Worm

72. No. 48 of the Exeter Book. Perhaps more accurately, the Book Moth. The riddle is closely modelled upon No. 16 in the collection of Symphosius, which is given for comparison:

> "Litera me pavit, nec quid sit litera novi.
> In libris vixi, nec sum studiosior inde.
> Exedi Musas, nec adhuc tamen ipsa profeci."

The solution of the Latin riddle is given as "Tinea."

Gnats

73. No. 58 of the Exeter Book. This riddle has been variously interpreted as referring to swallows, or gnats, or starlings. The analogies from Latin riddles, quoted by Professor

Tupper, seem to favor the solution " swallows." In that case we ought to read in l. 3 :

Dark-coated, dusky-winged, darting about,

and in the last line

Gable-roofed towns! Now tell me their name.

The Shield

No. 6 of the Exeter Book. " Illuminated Anglo-Saxon Mss. usually represent the warrior as armed with no other defensive weapons than shield and helmet. The shield, circular, or slightly oval in shape, is usually of linden-wood, sometimes covered with leather, with a metal-bound edge and in the center an iron boss, a small basin tapering at the top to a point and ending in a knob." — Tupper.

Barnacle

No. 11 of the Exeter Book. This puzzling riddle has been responsible for much ingenious guesswork. Among the answers suggested are the following: Ocean-furrow, Wake of a Vessel, Water-bubble, Anchor, Water-lily! Stopford Brooke (*E. E. L.*, p. 179, note) suggests " Barnacle-Goose " as the solution. Giraldus Cambrensis, a medieval writer, gives the following description of this mythical bird: " Barnacle geese are like marsh-geese, but somewhat smaller. They are produced from fir timber tossed along the sea, and are at first like gum. Afterwards they hang down by their beaks, as if from a seaweed attached to a timber, surrounded by shells in order to grow more freely. Having thus in process of time been clothed with a strong coat of feathers, they either fall into the water, or fly freely away into the air." Professor Tupper, in his note on the riddle, defends Brooke's interpretation ; and the additional evidence adduced by him seems now to me conclusive in favor of the Barnacle-goose. My own interpretation, made before I had seen his article, I have allowed to stand as a suggestion, although it will probably be

thought to be too fanciful. The "streamers of white," "Hwite wæron hyrste mine," were suggested to me by the way in which the green seas are churned into wavy lines of white foam by the barnacled undersides of a sailing-vessel when she heels to the wind. These "streamers of white" can be observed wherever the tide sweeps between the barnacled pilings of an old dock or bridge. On the other hand, the fact that "hyrste" is used of the feathers of the bird in the Swan riddle, favors the solution "Barnacle-Goose."

Honey-Mead

74. No. 28 of the Exeter Book collection. Professor Tupper, in his note to this riddle (p. 132), quotes a number of interesting analogues. "Honey was more important to the ancients than it is to us, for it constituted the chief ingredient of mead, the time-honored beverage of the Aryan peoples." — Sharon Turner (*Hist. of the Anglo-Saxons*, Bk. VII, Chap. IV) cites an Anglo-Saxon canon against drunkenness: "This is drunkenness, when the state of mind is changed, the tongue stammers, the eyes are disturbed, the head is giddy, the belly is swelled, and pain follows." Both passages cited by Tupper. Tacitus, long before, made the observation that the people of Germanic stock were addicted to the vice of drunkenness.

The Anchor

No. 17 of the Exeter Book collection. This riddle has a parallel in the Symphosius collection.

> "Mucro mihi geminus ferro conjungitur unco
> Cum vento luctor, cum gurgite pugno profundo.
> Scrutor aquas medias, ipsas quoque mordeo terras."

(A double point is joined to me with hooked iron. With the wind I struggle, I battle with the surge profound. I scan the midmost waves, and bite the very bottom.) The Old English riddle offers a fine example of the way in which the poet's

imagination vitalizes and dramatizes his object. The anchor has become a hero fighting desperately for the safety of the vessel committed to his charge.

The Plough

75. No. 22 of the Exeter Book collection. Professor Tupper has an interesting note on the ancient plough (p. 113), and gives references to pictures of ploughs in old Mss. "The illuminated Mss. are at variance regarding the form of the plough. In some the ploughs are of the rudest sort without wheels; in others they have wheels (so in the pictures of the Cædmon Ms.). All these ploughs are drawn by oxen, urged by a goad — usually in the hands of an attendant herd." — 3. **My master the farmer, old foe of the forest.** The Old English has simply, "Har holtes feond," hoary foe of the forest, which has also been interpreted as referring to the ox that draws the plough. — 10. **A curious prong**, etc. The coulter and share of the plough.

Gnomic Verses

Proverbial sayings, maxims of wisdom, reflections based on experience, were popular among the Germanic peoples from the earliest times, and were handed down in the traditional alliterative form. Two compilations of gnomic verses are found in the Old English Ms. collections, one in the Cotton Ms., comprising sixty-six lines, and given entire in the translation, the other in the Exeter Book, comprising two hundred six lines, from which a few extracts are given. But this by no means exhausts the store of "gnomic verse," in Old English literature. We find both the Epic and the Lyric verse of the Anglo-Saxons liberally interlined with gnomic sayings, sober moralizings which to our mind often interrupt the movement of the narrative or the flow of lyric feeling. No doubt the cultivation of literature in the monasteries emphasized this preaching tendency; but it would be a mistake to suppose that wher-

ever our taste is offended by the intrusion of the gnomic genre, we are dealing with interpolated matter. In spite of the apparently loose and haphazard manner in which the gnomic sayings are strung together in our collections, there is a certain unity of structure and design. The verses are closely knit together by alliteration and "enjambment," *i.e.* the running over of the sense from one line into the next, unlike, in this respect, to the favorite distich or heroic couplet of eighteenth-century didactic verse. The end of one "saying" and the beginning of the next are generally locked together by alliteration, but the alliterative line is rarely a thought unit. It is interesting to observe how alliteration is thus made to assist the memory in linking together a series of apparently disconnected sayings. The need of some such help probably explains the large preponderance of "run-on" lines in these gnomic collections. Here and there we seem to have remnants of an earlier stanzaic form. In their swift panoramic survey of life, and their delight in a huddled array of concrete observation, there is a curious analogy between these gnomic verses and some of the poems of Walt Whitman.

76. — 41. **Giant shall dwell on the fen.** See the description of Grendel's haunt, *Beowulf*, ll. 1345 ff. (p. 13).

77. — 54. **The wolf shall hang.** An outlaw was called a wolf. According to a widespread superstition, some men had the power of changing themselves into wolves. Such a man-wolf or "wer-wolf" was considered as especially dangerous, and as late as the seventeenth century men were tried in Europe for being wer-wolves.

VII. HISTORIC WAR POEMS

The Battle of Brunnanburg

This poem is in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 937, and was evidently intended as a piece of historical narrative. Æthelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great, and hereditary

ruler of Wessex, had been acknowledged overlord of Mercians, Danes of Northumbria, Britons of Strathclyde, and Scots. But in 937 a conspiracy against him was formed by Constantinus, king of the Scots, who joined with the Danes and Strathclyde Britons. The Norsemen of Ireland, under Anlaf or Olaf, aided their Northumbrian kinsmen, bringing their army over by sea from Dublin. The allies were defeated by Æthelstan and his brother at Brunnanburg with great slaughter. The site of Brunnanburg is unknown. Among several places mentioned, the most likely seems to be Bramber, near Preston in Lancashire, south of the Ribble. A great hoard of silver ingots and coins, none later than 930, was discovered near this place in 1847, and it has been suggested that this may have been the war-chest of the confederate army. (C. Hardwick, *Lancashire Battlefields*, quoted by Sedgefield in his introduction to the poem in the Belles Lettres Series.) Tennyson's fine version of the *Battle of Brunnanburg*, based on his son Hallam's prose translation, and the rhythms of the original, is well known, and is precious to all lovers of English poetry, as representing the effect which the old alliterative measure produced on the finest ear of the Victorian period. But Tennyson followed the prevailing custom of his day is considering the half-line of two beats, rather than the long line of four beats bound together by alliteration, as the metrical unit of the verse. As a result, Tennyson's version breaks up the alliterative scheme of Old English verse, and in so far fails to give the movement of the original. No one could undertake another version of Brunnanburg without showing the influence of Tennyson. Wherever I have been conscious of it, I have indicated it in the notes. The only reason for venturing on a new version of *The Battle of Brunnanburg* was to make it uniform in rhythm and alliterative plan with the other renderings of this series.

81. — 3. **Edmund Ætheling**. Three sons of Edward the Elder reigned in succession: Æthelstan, 925–940; Edmund, 940–946; Eadred, 946–955.

82. — 5. **Broke the shield-wall, hewed the lindenwoods.** So Tennyson. The original has "bordweall clufon, heowan heaþolinda," clove the shield-walls, hewed the battle-lindens. — 9. **True to their blood.** The blood of Ælfred the Great. Gardiner says of Eadred, the youngest of Æthelstan's brothers, "though sickly, he had all the spirit of his race." — 10. **Their hoard and their home.** Tennyson, "struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes." The Old English has "Hord and hamas," hearth and homes. — 11. **Boat-crews.** The regular name for the Danish invaders in the *Chronicle* is "scip-here," *i.e.* ship-army. — 15. **Came in the morning-tide gliding o'er earth.** Tennyson, "From when first the great sun-star of morning-tide . . . glode over earth." Old English, "Siþþan sunne up on morgentid, glad ofer grundas." "Till the glorious creature sank to its setting." So Tennyson. Old English, "Oþ þæt seo æþele gesceaft, sah to setle"; literally, "till the glorious creature, sank to setting." —19. **Shot over shield.** Old English, "ofer scyld sceoten." — 25. **Who came with Anlaf across the water.** *I.e.* from Dublin. Anlaf is the English form of Olaf. "There seem to have been two Olafs present at this battle: Anlaf Cuaran, son of Sihtric, Æthelstan's brother-in-law, and Anlaf, son of Godfrey, Sitric's brother." —27. The Mercians formed part of the West-Saxon army. Edward the Elder had added the midland districts as far north as Chester in the West and the Humber in the East, to the West-Saxon dominion. His sister Æthelflæd, who aided him in making his conquest, was known as the Lady of the Mercians. — 28. **hand-play.** Old English, "handplegan." — 35. **On the fallow flood.** Old English, "on fealone flod." — 36. **The Cunning Constantinus.** Tennyson, "Also the crafty one, Constantinus." Old English, "se frode," the wise old man. — 54. **Dublin to seek.** Dublin was the chief settlement of the Northmen in Ireland, and had been founded by the Viking leader Turgeis about 839 A.D. — 63. **The haggard kite.** Literally, the greedy hawk-of-war. It is possible that this is merely a descriptive epithet or kenning for the eagle. In that case we should translate:

"Leaving behind the white-tailed eagle
(Perched on the corpses), to prey on the carrion,
Greedy war-hawk, and that gray beast,
Wolf of the forest to feast on the slain."

Cf. Kipling's "Birds of Prey" March:

"The jackal an' the Kite
'Ave an 'ealthy appetite
An' you'll never see your soldier any more.
The eagle and the crow
They are waitin' ever so
An' you'll never see your soldier any more."

The Battle of Maldon

The fight commemorated in this poem took place in the year 991, and is thus described in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:* "In this year came Unlaf with ninety-three ships to Stan (Folkstone), and laid waste the country round about, and from there he went to Sandwich, and so on to Ipswich, and harried all the country. And then he came to Maldon, where the ealdorman Byrhtnoth with his force came to meet him and fought against him. And they slew the ealdorman there, and were masters of the field of battle, and afterwards peace was made with them." The famous Olaf Trygvasson, celebrated in Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf*, was the Norse leader. The site of the battle is described by Freeman (*Norman Conquest*, Vol. I, p. 268): "The fight of Maldon is the only battle of the days of Æthelred, of which any minute details are preserved, and every detail throws light on something in the manners or military tactics of the age. The battle took place near the town of Maldon (in Essex), on the banks of the tidal river Panta, now called the Blackwater. The town lies on a hill; immediately at its base flows one branch of the river, while another, still crossed by a medieval bridge, flows at a little distance to the north. The Danish ships seem to have lain in the branch nearest to the town, and their crews must have occupied the space between the two streams, while Brihtnoth came to the rescue from the north. He seems to have halted at the spot

now occupied by the church of Heybridge, having both streams between him and the town."

Byrhtnoth, alderman or ruler of Essex, under King Æthelred the Redeless, had been a benefactor of the monastery of Ely, situated not far from the scene of the battle. In a Latin chronicle of Ely, containing a somewhat legendary account of the fight, we are told that the Abbot, "hearing of the issue of the battle, went to the field with some monks, and seeking out the hero's body bore it back to the church and buried it honourably, placing a round lump of wax where the head had been."

The author of our poem was in all probability one of the monks of Ely. He was either an eye-witness of the battle, or heard the details from one of the survivors. Though the beginning and the end of the poem were missing in the original Ms., there is no doubt that in the portion preserved, and fortunately copied before the destruction of the Ms. by fire in 1731, we have practically the poem in its entirety, and it is therefore misleading to speak of the *Battle of Maldon* as a fragment, in the sense in which *The Fight at Finnsburg*, and *Waldere*, or even *Judith*, are fragments.

For additional details see the introduction to W. J. Sedgefield's edition of the poem in the Belles Lettres Series (D. C. Heath and Co., 1904), H. W. Lumsden's article and spirited translation of the poem in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 55, p. 371, and Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, cited above.

84. — 4. **Showed them how they should hold their shields.** "The fighting men of the fyrd or militia had but imperfect ideas of military discipline, and needed the personal instruction of their general even as to the proper holding and use of their arms" (Sedgefield). — 7. **Leaped from his steed.** Freeman points out that battles were fought on foot in England before the Conquest, though horses were used to get to and from the battlefield. However, the ornamented saddle given by Hrothgar to Beowulf is called the "Battle-seat" of the king. — 8. **His hearth band**, etc. His own retainers, or comitatus, who lived in his own hall, and were of his own household. Cf. *Ger-*

mania, Chap. 7; "non casus neque fortuita conglobatio turmam aut cuneum facit, *sed familiae et propinquitates*." — 14. **Send them tribute.** Æthelred the Redeless inaugurated the bad custom of buying off the Danes who were about to make raids. Money so paid was called Danegeld, *i.e.* Dane money.

85. — 49. **The breadth of the stream.** Below Maldon, the Blackwater opens into a sea-inlet, where a strong tide runs.

86. — 58. **On the bridge.** The bridge probably crossed only the deep channel, where the tide ran strong. The flats on either side would be bare or nearly bare at low tide, giving access to the bridge, but at high tide they would be covered. — 65. **Kept the approach**, etc. Literally, "would not make a flight of it at the ford." With Sedgefield I understand the "ford" to mean the shallow flats between either terminus of the bridge and the mainland. A ford is a place where "the crossing is shallow." The spirited fight on the bridge reminds us of Macaulay's ballad of Horatius. — 75. **Byrhthelm's son.** *I.e.* Byrhtnoth. — 81. **West over Panta.** — We should expect here "north over Panta," as from l. 118 it appears that the Vikings were south of the English. If the main channel bent to the north at the point of crossing, the Northmen charging from the southern bank would be heading northwest, which the exigencies of alliteration might easily make west. — 83. **Lindenwood.** A common kenning for shield. Cf. *Charm for a Sudden Stitch*, p. 2, l. 5, and *Brunnanburg*, p. 82, l. 6.

87. — 99. **Son of his sister.** This tie of relationship was considered in Germanic antiquity as more intimate and binding than that of "brother's son." — 104. **The thane**, etc. Literally, "bower-thane." The "bower" is the private sleeping apartment, as distinguished from the hall. When Beowulf fought Grendel in the hall, the Danes heard the noise in the "bowers." "Bower-thane" is therefore equivalent to the later chamberlain. — 120. **He shoved with his shield.** *I.e.* he caught the dart-point in his shield, but the shaft snapping short, splintered and wounded him. This seems to me a more, reasonable interpretation than Sedgefield's. In the *Njals*

Saga is a similar situation, when " Gunnar gave the shield a twist as the sword pierced it, and broke it short off at the hilt " (Chap. 30).

88. — 133. **Now one of the pirates,** etc. With this passage, describing the death of Byrhtnoth, should be compared the killing of Douglas in the ballad of Chevy Chase. When Byrhtnoth, mortally wounded, no longer can grasp his sword, he still keeps encouraging his men. So when Earl Douglas is stricken in at the breast-bane, he cried:

> " Fight ye, my merry men, whiles ye may,
> For my life-days be gane."

— 147. **Broad and Blood-marked.** Literally, brown-edged, — one of the conventional epithets for swords in Anglo-Saxon poetry and in the ballads. " Broad and brown-edged " is the sword of Grendel's dam in *Beowulf*. The epithets may refer to the rusty blood-stains purposely left on the sword-blade as marks of ancient valor and faithful service. Old English poetry is peculiarly sparing of color-epithets. Brown, gray, fallow, dun, are the only colors that appear frequently. Even in the ideal landscape of the *Phœnix*, and in the description of the birds' gorgeous plumage, the colors are suggested rather than described. — 153. **The hoar-headed warrior.** Probably more than a mere conventional epithet. In the *Life of Oswald*, Archbishop of York, written not long after the battle of Maldon, Byrhtnoth's end is thus described: " With his right arm he dealt blow on blow, unmindful of *the swan-like whiteness of his head*. . . . With his left arm he defended himself, forgetting his bodily weakness, for his prayers and good deeds sustained him." The prayer of Byrhtnoth breathes the atmosphere of the monastery, rather than of the battle-field, and seems out of keeping with the warlike temper of the rest of the poem. The Chevy Chase poet knew better:

> " For Witherington my heart was sore
> That ever he slain should be,
> For when both his legs were hewn in two
> Yet he kneeled and fought on his knee."

89. — 164. **The fiends of hell.** It is not necessary to understand this of the Norsemen, though the epithet is one that the author would be likely enough to apply to the heathen Danes, whom the English monks had good reason to hate, and whom they may very well have regarded as "in direct league with the devil," as Sedgefield suggests. It would be more in keeping with the spirit of the poem if Byrhtnoth, like Beowulf, had thought of the fate of his people, rather than of his own soul, at this juncture. — 187. **Æthelred's earl.** *I.e.* earl of King Æthelred, the West-Saxon ruler, 968–1016. — 195. **Remember the time**, etc. Cf. Beowulf's last fight, and the speech of Wiglaf, p. 24, ll. 86–136, and Professor Gummere's note on the passage.

91. — 236. **Leaderless, lordless**, etc. "A valuable survival of this taunting of men who broke the oath of loyalty is the cry of the sworn-brother in *Bewick and Graham:*

> "In every town that I ride through
> They'll say — 'There rides a brotherless man.'"
> (Gummere.)

— 249. **Æscferth.** He appears to have been an Englishman held by the Danes as a hostage. Managing to escape, he joined his own people against the enemy.

92. — 278. **He lay by his lord, a loyal thane.** Professor Gummere (*Old English Epic*, p. 136) quotes an interesting passage from *Saxo Grammaticus*, illustrating the loyalty of thanes to their lord. Hialto says: "Sweet it is to repay the gifts received from our lord . . . let us do with brave hearts all the things that in our cups we boasted . . . let us keep the vows we swore." And Bjarki answers: "I will die overpowered near the head of my slain captain, and at his feet thou also shalt slip on thy face in death, so that whoso scans the piled corpses may see in what wise we rate the gold our lord gave us" Saxo's Latin prose, by his own account, is based on an old Danish song. — 282. **Wistan.** He is called Thurstan's son, but in the next line he is referred to as "Wigeline's bearn,"

i.e. the child of Wigelin. There seems to be some confusion here. — 296. **Heart must be keener.** These words of Byrhtwold contain the essence of old Germanic heroism: fearless valor and a loyalty that keeps faith to the end and prefers death to dishonor.

PART SECOND

FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER

I. HISTORY AND ROMANCE

LAYAMON

How Layamon wrote his Book

With this account of himself, of his book, and of the authorities he used in compiling it, Layamon begins his long poem of the *Brut*, or *Chronicle*. The passage, being in the nature of a general preface, or introduction, is thus fairly complete in itself.

Almost all that is known about Layamon is contained in these few lines. There is a confiding simplicity in the poet's artless account of himself, which gives it a very human and therefore a lasting interest.

Layamon lived in northern Worcestershire, on the west bank of the Severn. The *Arnley*, or *Earnly* of which he speaks is the place now called *Arely Regis*, or *Arely Kings*. He is generally believed to have been a priest in the parish church there, and his declaration that he "*read bookes*" there is commonly supposed to mean that he read the services at the "*noble Church*" of which he has just spoken. The words "*read bookes*" may, however, be understood in a wider and more obvious sense, and they may possibly be related to Layamon's subsequent account of his studies and his bookish tastes, rather than to what has gone before.

Layamon wrote at the beginning of the thirteenth century (*cir.* 1205). His poem, a chronicle-history of Britain, is founded mainly on the *Brut* of the French poet Wace. It contains over 30,000 lines; and while it has no value as history, it is the longest and most memorable English poem of its time. In language it shows remarkably few traces of French influence, and it is notable as marking that revival of native literature and spirit which led to their ultimate triumph in the fourteenth century.

96. — 16, 17, 18. **Saint Bæda, — Saint Albin, — the bless'd Austin.** Layamon's statement concerning the books he used in compiling his *Brut* seems to be the result of a misunderstanding on his part. The *English book* was evidently the Anglo-Saxon translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, made by King Alfred. The book *in Latin* was Bede's original work, which Layamon seems to have thought a different book, written jointly by St. Augustine (" the fair Austin ") and Albinus (Saint Albin). Albinus, who was abbot of the monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, assisted Bede in the compilation of his work. It is evident that collaboration by Augustine and Albinus was impossible, as the former died in 604, and the latter in 732.

ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER

In Praise of England

The poem known as Robert of Gloucester's *Riming Chronicle* is a history of England from the earliest or mythical period to the latter part of the thirteenth century. It is believed that the entire work was composed in the Abbey of Gloucester, but it is thought probable that Robert (presumably a monk in the Abbey) only wrote the latter part of the poem, *i.e.* from the accession of Stephen (1135). In any case the work was completed (*cir.* 1297) about a hundred years after Layamon wrote his *Brut*.

The lines *In Praise of England* are interesting as a crude anticipation of those stirring tributes to that " royal seat of Kings " which the lover of English poetry will readily recall. The oft-quoted passage, here entitled *Norman and English*, is valuable for the light it throws on the state of the language at that critical stage of its growth. (See also Lyndsay's *Apology for Writing in the Vulgar and Maternal Tongue*, p. 273, *supra*, and note.)

LAWRENCE MINOT

The War Songs of Lawrence Minot are justly called " the most important national poems of the first half of the fourteenth century." Rough and vigorous, they are full of a genuine, but bitterly partisan, patriotism. " Minot," says a recent writer, " seems to have been a professional gleeman, who earned his living by following the camp and entertainng soldiers with the recitation of their own heroic deeds. It is possible, however, that his skill in versification may have led to his promotion to the post of minstrel to the King [Edward III], and that he held some recognized office about the court." The victories and other events which Minot celebrates all belong to the interval between 1333 and 1352.

The Battle of Halidon Hill

The Battle of Halidon Hill was fought in 1333. Edward III, who was besieging Berwick, attacked and completely routed a Scotch force under Sir Archibald Douglas, which had come to relieve the town. Berwick passed into the hands of the English, and has remained English territory to this day. Eleven of the Songs, or political ballads, of Minot have been preserved.

99. — 44. **Earl Moray**. John Randolph, third Earl of Moray, who died in 1346. He was one of the strongest supporters of the young king of Scotland, David II. In 1332, at Annan, Moray defeated Edward Balliol, who had previously

been crowned King of Scotland as the creature of Edward III. In the battle of Halidon Hill, Moray commanded a division of the Scotch army, and was one of the few Scottish nobles to escape and afterwards to flee to France. He later returned to Scotland, and continued his activity in the interest of Scottish independence. — 47. **Philip Valois**. Philip VI, king of France 1328–1350, who, in the interests of France, became an ally of Scotland against their common enemy, England.

100. — 79. **Sir John Comyn**, surnamed *The Red*, one of the rivals of Bruce to the throne of Scotland after Edward Balliol's renunciation. He was murdered on the altar steps of the Franciscan church at Dumfries by Bruce and his followers, 1306.

Prayer for King Edward

This prayer is taken from the impressive beginning of the third of Minot's songs. It is one of those dealing with the war against France, and tells how King Edward went to join his allies in Flanders.

SONG OF THE SCOTTISH MAIDENS AFTER BANNOCKBURN

This song is apparently one of the ancient ballads, or dance-songs, of the Scottish people. It is found in an old chronicle, the *Brut of Engelonde* (*cir.* 1350), where we are told, by way of preface, that "the maidens made a songe therefore in that cuntre of Kynge Edwarde of Engelonde, and in this manner thei songe." Then follows the song. Robert Fabyan (d. 1513) also gives it in his Chronicle. "This songe," he says, "was after many dayes sungyn in daunces, in carolles of ye maydens and mynstrelles of Scotlande, to reproofe and dysdane of Englyshmen, with dyverse other which I over passe." Marlowe ingeniously introduces it into his tragedy of *Edward II* (Act II, sc. 2), after Mortimer has reproached the King for his defeat at Bannockburn; and Lancaster, adding his taunt, goes on to repeat the song that has been made on England's shame.

Lan. — " And thereof came it, that the fleering Scots
To England's high disgrace have made this jig."
— *Maidens of England*, etc.

Henderson says (*Scottish Vernacular Literature*, p. 18), "The phrases 'With heve-a-lowe' and 'With rumbylowe' are found both in later Scotch and English poetry. They here probably indicate the occurrence of a dance movement emphasised by special gestures or the beating of musical instruments."

JOHN BARBOUR

Freedom

John Barbour was born about 1320. He was Archdeacon of Aberdeen for thirty-eight-years, and he died in 1396, or a few years before his great English contemporary, Chaucer. His poem *The Bruce* (which resembles an epic or a romance rather than a Chronicle) deals, as its name implies, with the adventurous career, the triumph and death of the great national hero of Scotland. But, from the very nature of its subject, it is even more than a tribute to a single hero, its underlying theme is the liberation of Scotland from her foreign oppressor. Its twenty books are, after all, but one long patriotic song of victory, and it may fairly be said that the main theme and essential spirit of the poem find their concentrated expression in the splendid and still familiar outburst in praise of *Freedom*.

SIR ORPHEO

The romance of *Sir Orpheo* dates from about the beginning of the fourteenth century. It belongs to that group of poems known as " Breton lays "; that is, it is one of a number of short rhymed narrative poems of Celtic origin, which were current in medieval England. Its Breton origin is suggested in the opening lines, which form a prelude to the story. *Sir Orpheo* has something of the simplicity, directness, and even the measure of the old ballads, and in fact it has reappeared in

Shetland in ballad form, with a Norse refrain. (Child, *Ballads*, I. No. 19.) The classical story of Orpheus is transformed in the romance into a medieval fairy story, and the gloomy realm of Pluto becomes a beautiful land of faerie, not unlike that which Thomas the Rhymer was compelled to visit, or that magic spot from which young Tamlane was released.

Three versions of this poem have been preserved. One (Harl. Ms. 3810) has been edited by Ritson (*Metrical Romances*, II, p. 248); another (Auchinleck Ms.) has been printed by Laing; and the third (Ashmole Ms. 61) is included in Halliwell's *Illustrations of the Fairy Mythology of the Midsummer Night's Dream*. The first named of these versions, being shorter than the others, has been generally followed in the present modernization of the poem, but in several instances passages from the text last mentioned have been incorporated.

103. — 19. **Glee and Game.** An example of the frequent combination of synonymous words. *Game* is here used in the sense of mirth, delight, amusement.

104. — 47. **Crassens.** The Auchinleck Ms. reads *Traceyns* and goes on to explain the name by asserting that Traciens was the ancient name for Winchester:

> " For Winchester was cleped then;
> Traciens withouten mo."

I can find no authority, however, for this assertion.

SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

A vast number of romantic stories, some in prose, others in verse, were popular during the Middle Ages. War, chivalric adventure, love, and religion entered in varying proportions into these stories, and helped, or often combined, to give them a peculiar tone or characteristic atmosphere. These *romances*, indeed, taking form, as they did, in the ages of religious faith, chivalry, and romantic love, were full of the spirit of their time, and as a whole are among the most extensive, important, and characteristic creations of the Middle Ages in literature.

The Normans brought many romances into England, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when English began to gain in literary importance, some of these Norman or French romances were retold or imitated in English. We can form but little idea of the volume and importance of this literature of romance from the few selections here given. These selections have been introduced for their intrinsic value, and in order that the romances might not be left entirely unrepresented. But as long narrative poems cannot be really known through detached fragments, the romances cannot be adequately represented in a book of this scope and character.

The romance of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* belongs to that large and important group of romance which deals with the stories of King Arthur and his knights. It must be remembered that in the earlier Arthurian stories Sir Gawayne, the King's nephew, was one of the noblest and greatest knights of the Round Table, not unworthy to stand beside Sir Percival, and utterly different from the despicable Sir Gawayne of Mallory's *Morte D'Arthur* or Tennyson's *Idylls*.

The authorship of the romance of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* has often been discussed, but remains a matter of speculation. From the dialect in which the poem is written, and from various other indications, it appears that its unknown author lived on the Welsh border, possibly in Cheshire, or in Lancashire. We possess three other poems, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, and *The Pearl* (see p. 145, *supra*), all written in the same dialect, and composed about the same time as *Sir Gawayne*. Although these three poems are not romances, they have many things in common with *Sir Gawayne*, so that it is extremely probable that all four poems are the work of the same author. (See note on *The Pearl*, p. 454.)

Sir Gawayne was written about 1360–1370, or about the time Chaucer made his first visit to Italy, and when Langland was engaged on his first draught of *Piers the Ploughman*. It is commonly given the highest place among English metrical romances, and Gaston Paris does not hesitate to call it "the

jewel of English medieval literature" (*L' Histoire Litéraire de la France*, Vol. XXX).

The Seasons

I repeat here what I have said elsewhere on this passage: "There is also an appreciation of the various aspects of Nature remarkable in that early time. Three hundred years before Thomson published the *Seasons*, the poet of *Sir Gawayne* packed into thirty lines the germ of Thomson's poem. The changes wrought by the successive seasons are brought before us by a few suggestive details."

Sir Gawayne's Journey

119. — 1. **Logres**, or **Loegres**, the name given to England (or to that part of Britain which afterwards became England) by Geoffrey of Monmouth. According to Geoffrey, Brutus divided Britain among his three sons, Locrin, Albanact, and Kamber. "Locrin, the eldest, possessed the middle part of the island, *called afterwards from his name Loegria* (or Logres)." Kamber had Wales (hence called Kambria, or Cambria), and Albanact, Scotland (hence Albania, the ancient name of the Scottish Highlands). (*Hist. of Brit.*, Bk. II, Chap. I). — 11. **Wirral's wilderness**. Wirral is the Old English or Anglo-Saxon *Wīrheal*, the name of the land (peninsula) between the Dee and the Mersey. See *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under years 894 and 895.

II. MORAL AND RELIGIOUS VERSE

Poema Morale

The *Moral Ode*, or *Poema Morale*, is "a sermon in verse." The poet, after giving some account of himself by way of introduction, bids every one to lay up in heaven the treasures of good works. He pictures the pains of hell and the joys of heaven, and prays that all may be brought to that bliss.

" Christ grant we such a life may lead or have here such an end,
That we may thither come at last when we from hence shall
wend."

Professor Manly calls the *Poema Morale* " the first important English poem after the Norman Conquest " (*English Poetry*, Introduction), and Ten Brink says that it " originated, perhaps as early as the reign of Henry I " (1100–1135); but Morris places it not earlier than 1170, or in the time of Henry II. It is written in a southern dialect, and contains about four hundred lines. As in one passage the rivers Avon and Stour are spoken of together (" Nor may salt water quench it nor Avon stream nor Stour "), it has been suggested that the poem was composed by some one who lived near the junction of the Avon and Stour at Christ-Church, Hampshire. " There was a monastery," says Morris, " at Christ-Church at an early period, which was converted into a priory of St. Austin's Canons in 1150. This locality would suit very well." (*Specimens of Early English*, Pt. I, p. 354.)

ORM

Ormulum

The *Ormulum*, so called " because that Orm it wrought," was composed about the beginning of the thirteenth century. Orm was a monk in some Augustinian monastery. He lived in the northeastern part of the Midland region, possibly near the southern border of Lincolnshire. The object of his book, and the circumstances which led him to compile it, are given in the *Dedication* to his thrice-brother Walter. His purpose was to make a paraphrase in English verse " of all the Gospels in the ecclesiastical year as arranged in the Mass-book " (that is, of two hundred and forty-three passages of Scripture) and to supplement each of the Scriptural selections with explanatory comments and appropriate religious instruction. About thirty of these paraphrases, with the accompanying sermons,

survive. Possibly the work was never completed, possibly the lacking portions may have been written and lost. It is true that the fragment of Orm's industry which remains consists of over ten thousand lines, but as the patient monk did not need to say anything original, nor dream, apparently, of saying anything poetic, it may be that he plodded on to the end of his enormous task. The *Ormulum* is one of the many works intended to bring the Bible home to the mind and conscience of the English people, to be placed, by virtue of its intention, with the miracle-plays and the *Cursor Mundi*.

THOMAS OF HALES

A Love Letter

Thomas of Hales (or Hailes) in Gloucestershire, was a Franciscan monk, who lived in the early part of the thirteenth century. He studied in Oxford and Paris, and is said to have been a doctor of theology at the Sorbonne. He was famous for his learning in Italy and France as well as in England, but beyond this fact little is known of his life. He was favorably known, either personally or by reputation, to Adamus Mariscus, or Adam de Marisco, a learned brother of the Franciscan order, who taught theology and excelled in mathematics (*Monumenta Franciscana*, ed. J. S. Brewer, p. 395). It is possible that Hales is the place in Gloucestershire where in 1246 Hayles (holy) Abbey was founded by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, second son of John, King of the Romans and Emperor of Germany, brother of Henry III, in accordance with a vow made by Richard when in danger at sea. The Abbey was dedicated with much pomp and ceremony, and Richard is said to have remarked, "I wish it had pleased God that all my great expenses in my castle of Wallingford had been as wisely employed." The occasion which prompted Thomas of Hales to the composition of his poem, *The Love Rune* (that is, the *Love Counsel*, or *Love Letter*), is set forth in the first stanza.

It is a letter of advice written in response to the request of a maiden dedicated to God. The King Henry referred to (ll. 77, *et seq.*) is Henry III (1216–1272). Contempt for the vanishing pleasures of this present world, rapturous anticipation of the lasting joys of the world to come, and the exaltation of a mystical and spiritual love above any earthly passion, all these themes, so congenial to the medieval mind, so intensely and characteristically medieval in their spirit, find utterance in the poem. (See Morris, *Old English Miscellanies*, pp. 93 *et seq.*)

124. — 41. The spirit of this stanza is remarkably close to that of Dunbar's poem, the *Lament for the Makers*, p. 264 and note.

The name of Dido, which appears in the original stanza, has been omitted in the modernization.

THE DEBATE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL

As its title tells us, this poem is a *debate*, or controversial dialogue, between the body and the soul, the warring parts of man's nature which St. Paul speaks of as "the flesh" and "the spirit." In *The Debate*, as in the writings of St. Paul (*Gal.* v: 17), these two are represented as "contrary the one to the other." In the Middle Ages this distrust of the body was carried to an extreme, and led to those excesses of asceticism with which we are all familiar. The spirit which drew the hermit to his cave, or St. Simeon Stylites to his pillar, found many expressions in medieval literature (see, *e.g.*, *The Prick of Conscience* of the English hermit, Richard Rolle, and contrast with it Browning's *Rabbi ben Ezra*, particularly stanzas VIII and XII). Nevertheless, this old idea of the inherent incompatibility of body and soul, and of their natural antagonism, reappears in the nineteenth century, finding expression in the terms of modern science, in Tennyson's poem, *By an Evolutionist*.

By virtue of its controversial form, *The Debate of the Body and the Soul* belongs to an important class of poems, examples of which are found in many parts of Western Europe. Accord-

ing to Ten Brink, these " disputes," or " debates," first " appeared in the poetry of the Troubadours, as true poetical controversies between two opponents; later, by the North French, who had been preceded by the Middle Latin poets in this, in the form of debates between different classes personified, or different animals, between wine and water, body and soul, sometimes in dramatic, sometimes in epic form." As direct dialogue, the *debates*, *strifes*, *disputations*, or whatever they may be called, were important in the development of the drama (*Early English Literature*, 215). In the dispute between *The Owl and the Nightingale* (p. 136), we have another notable example of this class of poem.

The Debate of the Body and the Soul is one among a number of poems on the same theme. It is founded upon a Latin poem of the twelfth century, known as the *Vision of Philibert*, which may have been written in England. But *The Debate*, to quote Professor G. L. Kittredge, " is by no means a mere translation of the Latin Vision. It handles the material with great freedom, and far surpasses the original. Indeed, it is incomparably the best embodiment of the theme that can be found in any literature." (Introduction to *The Debate of the Body and the Soul*, modernized by F. J. Child.)

The Debate was written in the latter part of the thirteenth century; its author is not known. The *Vision of Philibert* (*Visio Fulberti*) is printed by Wright in his *Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes*. A free but smooth and poetical rendering of *The Debate* has been made by Sir Theodore Martin. It is given in Linow's *Erlanger Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, Vol. I. The version of Professor F. J. Child, already referred to, is more literal. It has been reprinted by Professor Kittredge with an introduction. (Boston, 1908.)

128. — 25. The original first four lines of this stanza are:

" Whare ben al þine worþliche wede,
þine somers wiþ riche bed,
þi proude palfrais and þi stede,
þat þon about in dester led? "

The author is here apparently suggesting the former state and luxury of the Body, by picturing a typical procession or progress of a knight with his attendants from one town or castle to another. The *palfreys* were the horses upon which the knight and his companions rode ordinarily; the *battle-steed* was mounted when an encounter seemed imminent. The *pack horses*, or sumpters, would carry the baggage, including in all probability the knight's pallet and "rich" bedding. — 38. **Sendals.** Sendal was "a silken material used in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for rich dresses, flags, pennons, etc." — *Cent. Dict.* (See note 202, 440.)

134. — 208. **Heckle.** An instrument consisting of a board in which are inserted sharp pins or spikes, used for dressing flax or hemp by splitting and straightening out the fibres. See Burns' *Address to the Toothache.* — 229. **Pris.** The note of the horn blown at the taking or killing of the deer, in hunting. From the French *prendre.*

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

This poem is a deservedly famous example of the poems of strife, or controversy (see p. 448, *supra*). It dates from the early half of the thirteenth century, probably before 1227, and is written in the dialect of the south of England. Moreover, Master Nicholas of Guilford, to whom the rival birds finally agree to submit their contention, lived in the south, at Portisham, a town in Dorsetshire about seven miles southwest of Dorchester. Some have thought that Nicholas of Guildford was himself the author of the poem, but as he is mentioned in the third person and referred to in complimentary terms, it is more probable that it was written by some one who knew Nicholas and who took this opportunity of paying a tribute to his friend.

The most obvious and natural interpretation of the poem is that it presents the familiar struggle between two antagonistic ideals of life, the ideal of the refined, joyous, pleasure-lover, and the ideal of the ascetic, — the "Cavalier" and

the " Puritan " of later times. " It is the old conflict," says Ten Brink, " between beauty, brilliancy, youth, cheerfulness, and a serious, gloomy, sullen old age, between pleasure and asceticism " (*Early English Literature*, I. 215). The nightingale contemptuously tells the owl that one song from her mouth is " better than all thy kind could ever do." The owl replies: " Dost thou think they (*i.e.* those that are saved) so easily come into God's Kingdom all singing? No, no, they must feel that they must get forgiveness of their sins by long weeping, before they may ever come there. Therefore I advise that men be ready, and more weep than sing, they who strive for the presence of the Heavenly King."

We are not told in whose favour Master Nicholas decided the dispute, but the poet's sympathy seems to go out to the nightingale, and the unlovable side of the owl's character is presented with vigour and apparently grim enjoyment. Professor Schofield remarks that the poem " seems to contain a modern, a personal note, revealing an inner struggle of the author with his conflicting tendencies, æsthetic and moral, which has ended in a just appreciation of the value of each." (*English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 428).

According to a more recent view, the " ultimate intention of the poem is not to present dramatically conflicting ideals of life, but to suggest (or advocate) the introduction of a new and more secular kind of poetry. It is, in other words, the expression of a spirit of revolt against the then prevalent tendency of poetry to occupy itself too exclusively with religious subjects. (Professor Atkins in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, I, 247–248, 266.) It cannot be denied that this novel interpretation, if accepted, goes far to rob the poem of its breadth of interest and permanent value. Its theme, if we accept Professor Atkins' view, ceases to be fundamental and human, and becomes little more than the wrangle of rival schools of poetry, a literary matter of temporary or purely historic interest. See also, Dale's *National Life and Character in the Mirror of Early English Literature*, p. 195.

137. — 40. **Harsh sputtering.** It is difficult to reproduce the discordant power of this passage. The lines in the original are:

"Me luste bet speten, þane singe
Of þine fule ȝoȝelinge."

That is: "I like better to spit, than to sing, because of thy vile gogeling."

Gogeling (or *gogelinge*) (which survives in the verb *guggle*, v. *Cent. Dict.*) is descriptive of a gurgling sound in the throat, it is akin to *gargle*. — 48. **Trill:**

"Think you in song I have no skill,
Merely because I cannot *trill?*"

Writelinge, the word here translated *trill*, means, according to Morris, a style of singing adorned with "shakes and flourishes." The owl feels that he can sing in his own more dignified way, even if he cannot perform such feats of vocal agility as the nightingale. *Writelinge* is apparently connected with the Anglo-Saxon word *wriðan*, to *writhe*, or to twist, and may carry with it a tinge of contempt.

ROBERT OF BRUNNE

In Praise of Women

Robert Mannyng of Brunne has been called "the most eminent representative of the literature of Lincolnshire in the first half of the fourteenth century" (Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, I. 297). He was born at Brunne (now Bourne), a town about ten miles north of the southern border of Lincolnshire, and entered the priory (some six miles from his native place) of Sempringham, then the chief seat of a religious order called the Gilbertines. His poem *Handlyng Synne* was begun, as he tells us in the Introduction, in 1303. It is founded upon the *Manuel des Pechéz*, a poem written in French by an Englishman, William of Wadington, in York-

shire. Mannyng thus ingenuously explains the title of his poem:

"Men clepen þe boke 'Handlyng Synne.'
In Frenshë þer a clerk hyt sees,
He clepyð it 'Manuel des Pecchés,'
'Manuel' ys 'handlyng wyþ hende';
'Peeches' ys synne, y undyrstende
Þese twey wurdys þat beyn otwynne,
Do hem togedyr, ys 'Handlyng Synne.'"

The poem treats of the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Sacraments, and of other religious or moral themes, and constantly enlivens doctrinal instruction and reproof with appropriate stories, or anecdotes, chosen to illustrate the didactic part of the work, and enforce its lessons by example. For, he says, he has made his poem for those who love to hear rimes and stories over their ale, and who are prone to fall into sin.

Mannyng, it has been well said, "combines the *trouvère* with the homilist," and *Handlyng Synne* is not only valuable for the light it throws on the thought and social conditions of the time, but for its spirited narratives, and even its gleams of poetry. The lines here entitled *In Praise of Women* show the author's poetic power at its best.

Mannyng also translated a *Chronicle of England* out of French into English verse.

CURSOR MUNDI

The object and character of this long and important poem are sufficiently set forth in the *Prologue* (p. 140). It is enough to say that it was written in the North (some think in the Diocese of Durham, some in north Lancashire), and that its author lived in the thirteenth or, perhaps, the beginning of the fourteenth century. It was written in English, the language of the masses, "for the love of English folk," and so bore its part in that revival of the old national language and literature

which has already been referred to. (See Robert of Gloucester's *In Praise of England*, p. 96, and Lyndsay's *Apology for Writing in the Vulgar and Maternal Language*, p. 273, and notes.)

140. — 3. **Alisaundere**, etc. This list includes some of the most famous and important groups or cycles of romance, those on Alexander, on Brut, or Brutus, the supposed founder of Britain, and on Arthur and his knights. The fight of Charles (Charlemagne) and Roland against the Saracens, the battle of Roncevalles, is described in the famous French romance, *Chanson de Roland*.

141. — 17. **Tristrem and Ysote.** Tristan (Tristrem, or Tristram) and Isolde (or Iseult). Tristrem was famous as knight, hunter, harper, and lover. His tragic story has often been told, from the days of its medieval beginnings to the time of Wagner, Matthew Arnold, and Swinburne. (See Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, pp. 201 ff.) — 19. **Joneck.** A hero or character in one of the early romances, which has apparently not been preserved. In other versions of the poem (Göttingen and Trinity Mss.), Joneck becomes *King Ionet* and *Kyng Ion* respectively. — 19. **Ysambrase**, another popular figure who is the subject of a romance in "Thornton Romances." (Emerson.) He was a brave and kindly knight whose fault had been indifference to God. In punishment he suffers many trials, but in the end is chastened and triumphant. — 20. **Ydoine . . . Amadase.** The heroine and hero of an old French romance, *Amadas and Ydoine*. Amadas was a descendant of Amadis de Gaul, the son of the fabulous King Perion of Wales, and Elisena, a British princess. There is also an English romance of *Sir Amadas*.

RICHARD ROLLE

The Prick of Conscience

Richard Rolle, the Hermit of Hampole, was born at Thornton, Yorkshire. He studied at Oxford, but being dissatisfied with the teachings of the Schoolmen, left the University and

resolved to lead a life of prayer and devotion as a hermit. He preached to the people in English, against the abuses of the time and against some of the theological doctrines of the Church, and was thus in two respects a forerunner of Wyclif. *The Prick of Conscience*, written about 1340, is addressed to the unlearned "that can ne Latyne understand," and is intended by its dreadful picture of death and judgment to prick the reader's conscience, so that he may "work good works and flee folly."

THE PEARL

Points of resemblance between *The Pearl* and certain poems of France and Italy (particularly the Old French poem, *The Romance of the Rose*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and an eclogue of Boccaccio) have been observed and commented on by scholars. Nevertheless, a mere general resemblance between two works, a similarity of tone or incident, does not prove conclusively that one of them is a direct and conscious imitation of the other. Both authors may have drawn their ideas independently from a common source, or both may be independently impelled to express a certain spiritual mood, which, as it is characteristic of the time, is common to both.

In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante shows us Beatrice, his heavenly guide, among the blessed; in the *Pearl* the poet shows us the little maiden, his "Queen" and teacher, surrounded by the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem. We realize that these two poems (different in many ways) have yet something in common, because each, in its own fashion, expresses the religious faith, the mysticism, the spiritualized devotion to womanhood, which is a characteristic mood of the medieval mind. Yet while the mere similarity of the incident, or situation, may not, *taken by itself*, justify us in asserting that the author of the *Pearl* consciously borrowed from Dante, we think this unknown English poet had breathed the same spiritual air as Dante and certain poets of France, and that he was at home in their world.

But whatever the relation may be between the *Pearl* and certain continental poems (a matter about which opinions

differ), in the English poetry of the time, at least, this mystical vision stands virtually alone. Although we cannot certainly tell the name of this poet of western England who wrote *Sir Gawayne* and the *Pearl*, his spirit survives in his work, and that spirit sets him apart from his two great contemporaries in poetry — Chaucer and Langland. It stamps his work, anonymous as it is, with the impress of a defined personality. Chaucer, born in London and bred at Court, shows us the world he knew and enjoyed; sympathetic, observant, he yet speaks for the upper classes. Langland, the obscure countryman, coming from the Malvern Hills to live on and in London, makes audible the cry of the poor. But the poet of the Western Midlands had still other worlds to interpret and reveal: the world of old romance (which Chaucer touched upon, travestied, perhaps, in *Sir Thopas*) and the world of the invisible. And whether we ride through the plains with Sir Gawayne, faithful to his vows in the face of every obstacle, or whether we fall asleep with the poet in the *Pearl*, and see the heavens opened, the dominant purpose, underlying difference of presentation, is similar or the same. This west of England poet is not occupied, like Chaucer, in painting the manners or humours of his time, in making the human comedy of medieval life live in the imagination; he is not bent, like Langland, on solving the social problems that vexed the England of his generation; his purpose is primarily moral, his object is to show the place of certain fundamental virtues in the individual life. His hero, Sir Gawayne, is notable for his faith, his courage, his endurance or patience, and his purity; although even Gawayne is not altogether free from a touch of human weakness. *Cleanness* (or *Purity*) is the theme of another of the author's poems, and the virtues of purity and patience are again celebrated in the *Pearl*. In the *Pearl* the influence of a child, the spotless pearl of innocence, reaches the poet from a world beyond ours in the tumult of his grief, and calms his rebellion and impatience into a patient acceptance of the Divine Will.

Are we right in saying that the *Pearl* has something about it

that sets it apart in the national literature of its own, or even of earlier times? Descriptions of the joys of heaven are not infrequent in Old and Middle-English poetry; the device of the sleep and the subsequent dream, or vision, employed by Chaucer (as in his *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*) and by Langland in *Piers the Ploughman*, is a familiar one. But to one who has entered into the spirit of the *Pearl* these resemblances seem external and comparatively unimportant. It is even more essential to feel that the *Pearl* differs from certain other English poems than to notice any details in which it may resemble them. That difference is a difference of quality, which can be better felt than defined, and it is that elusive quality above all which makes the poem, as Tennyson called it, the "true Pearl of our poetic prime."

Great dispute has arisen over the interpretation of this anonymous and mystical poem. According to one view, that of Professor Gollancz, Dr. Osgood, and others, it is the lament of a father for his daughter, whose loss he mourns in the symbolism of the lost pearl and in his vision of her in the heavenly kingdom. Professor Schofield, on the contrary, maintains that the poem possesses no such personal significance, and that, from beginning to end, it is an example of medieval mysticism and allegory, expressing through the symbolism of the pearl the beauty of purity and holiness. (See Gollancz, in *Cambridge History of English Literature*, I, Chap. XV, pp. 357 ff.; and Schofield in *Pub.*, M. L. A. XIX, p. 154, and *ib.* XXIV, p. 585.)

Much of the difficulty in interpreting the poem lies in the first stanza:

> "Perle plesaunte to Prynces paye,
> To clanly clos in golde so clere!
> Oute of Oryent, I hardyly saye,
> Ne proued I neuer her precios pere,
> So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
> So smal, so smoþe her syde3 were.
> Queresoeuer I jugged gemme3 gaye,

I sette hyr sengeley in synglere.
Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere;
Þurȝ gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, fordolked of luf-daungere,
Of þat pryuy perle wythouten spot."

There are several editions and numerous translations of the *Pearl*.

Among others the following may be mentioned. Editions: I. Gollancz, London, 1891: C. G. Osgood (Belles Lettres Series), 1906. Translations: Gollancz (to accompany his edition of the text, *supra*); Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, 1906; G. G. Coulton, London, 1906; S. Jewett, 1908; and a prose translation by C. G. Osgood, 1907, full of beauty and poetic insight.

145. — 9. **Arbére.** For the meaning of this term see note **187**, 199.

147. — 43. **Gillyfleur, ginger, and gromyloun**, the gilly-flower, the ginger plant, and the gromwell or graymill.

148. — 91. **No citole's string nor gittermere.** The citole is a small dulcimer, that is, an instrument shaped like a trapezium with wires stretched across its frame. It seems that while the dulcimer was usually played by striking the strings with hammers, the citole, being smaller, could be played by pricking or thrumming the strings. The gittern is the same as the cithern, a kind of guitar.

WILLIAM LANGLAND

Piers the Ploughman

Until recently the poem known as *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman* has been supposed to be the work of a certain William Langland, or Langley. Its author, according to this generally accepted view, was born at Cleobury-Mortimer, in southern Shropshire, about 1332. He came to London, where he made a scanty living by assisting in singing masses for the repose of the dead; and he devoted himself to

the writing and rewriting of his *Vision*. There are three principal versions, or texts, of *Piers the Ploughman*, and scholars have hitherto agreed that all these versions were the work of Langland. Langland, as it has been supposed, was constantly revising and enlarging the original draught of his poem; these three versions, embodying his principal changes and additions, would thus correspond to successive revised and enlarged editions of a book in modern times.

This view is now questioned. It is contended that what we know as the *Poem of Piers the Ploughman*, in its various versions, is not the work of Langland, nor of any one author, but is really a group, or "cluster," of poems composed by various unknown poets. Even the first version of the poem (or *Text A.*, as it is called) was not all written by one man. The occasional references to Langland himself in the poem are thought fictitious and untrustworthy, and the figure of the gaunt seeker after Truth fades into myth and becomes as insubstantial as the dissolving mists on the hills of Malvern, so long linked with his name. Professor Manly thus concludes his able exposition of this view, "Our study of the Piers the Ploughman cluster of poems has shown us that that confused voice and that mighty vision were the voice and vision, not of one lonely, despised wanderer, but of many men, who, though of diverse tempers and gifts, cherished the same enthusiasm for righteousness and hate for evil." (See *Cambridge History of English Literature*, II, Chap. I, and for a refutation of this theory, M. Jusserand's article in *Modern Philology*, January, 1909. The entire controversy is reported in *E. E. T.*, Original Series, V. 139, extra Vol.)

The comparative merits of these opposing theories cannot be discussed here; it is enough to say that the portions of the poem given in the present collection are taken from the early part of *Text A*, and are therefore, according to either view, the work of a single author.

155. — 2. **In cloak as a shepherd.** The original reads: "I shep me into shroudes as I a sheep (or shepe) were,"

which is ordinarily understood to mean: I put myself in a coarse garment (or cloak) as though I were a shepherd. Morley, however, suggested the following interpretation, which is ingenious but probably unsound: "'Shepe' here is said to mean, as it can mean, shepherd, and William is supposed to have put on a shepherd's dress, which resembled that of a hermit. I think that 'shepe' means sheep, as the opposite to shepherd, and that William on a summer's day put off the clerical dress that marked his place among the pastors, and made himself as one of the flock," etc. (*E. W.*, IV, 287). — 5. **Malvernè hillès.** The Malvern hills extend north and south along the western border of Worcestershire. There was formerly a convent and school at Malvern, a town near the foot of these hills, and Jusserand thinks it likely that Langland "first studied" at this school (*Literary History of the English People*, I, 375–376).

156. — 37. **Yet have wit at their will**, etc. The minstrels, who give an innocent pleasure by their music, are distinguished from the jesters and jugglers, who seek out and perform all kinds of silly tricks, and make fools of themselves, while they are perfectly able to work if they choose. I might quote (the poet says in effect) what St. Paul says about idleness (*i.e.* "If a man does not work, neither shall he eat," *II Thess.* iii: 10) and show that it applies to them, but I will not because he who speaks evil, or slanders (*Qui turpiloquium loquitur*), is Lucifer's servant. — 40. **Bidders and Beggars.** Another example of the conjunction of synonymous words for the sake of alliteration and of metrical facility. See *glee and game*, **103**, 19. — 44. *Robert's men*, *Robartes men*, or *Roberdsmen* "were a set of lawless vagabonds, notorious for their outrages when *Piers the Ploughman* was written. . . . Sir Edward Coke supposes them to have been originally followers of Robin Hood in the reign of Richard I." (Skeat.) — 47. **To seek for St. James.** The shrine of St. James the Great, at Santiago (*i.e.* St. James) de Compostella, a town in northwestern Spain, was one of the most famous in Europe. During the Middle

Ages many pilgrimages were made to this shrine (which was believed to contain the body of the Apostle), especially, it is said, by Englishmen. See Southey's poem, *The Pilgrim to Compostella*.

157. — 54. **Walsingham**. A small town in the northern part of Norfolk, England, was another famous place of pilgrimage. There was a famous image of the Virgin in the Priory there, which was known as "our Lady of Walsingham." There are numerous contemporary references to the pilgrimages to Walsingham (see, *e.g.*, the poem *As you came from the holy land of Walsinghame*, attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh). — 58. **Friars of the four orders**: *i.e.* the Carmelites, or White Friars; the *Augustines*, or Austin Friars; the *Dominicans*, or Black Friars, and the *Franciscans*, or Gray Friars. — 71. **Falseness in fasting**. *I.e.* of falseness (or unfaithfulness) in keeping their vows of fasting.

158. — 92. **Wards — wardmote**, each *ward*, or division, of London had its ward-mote, or ward-meeting of the citizens, presided over by the Alderman whose duty it was to select the officials and regulate the affairs of the ward. The poet complains that ecclesiastics desert their religious duties, and stay in London. Some of them are in the King's service, and count the silver coming to the Crown in the Courts of Exchequer and of Chancery, claiming the money due to the King from the various wards and wardmotes, as well as goods which were without an owner (or waifs) and property left by an alien who had died without a will (estrays). — 112. **Dieu vous sauve, Dame.** "God save you, Dame (or," according to another version, Dame Emma). "Evidently the refrain of some low popular song" (Skeat).

159. — 117. **The roast to defy**. The roast meat to *digest*. See "Defy," *Cent. Dict.*

The Vision

159 — 140. **I fostered thee first**, etc. Literally, I *received* thee first (viz. at baptism), and taught thee thy faith. You brought me vows (gave me pledges when you were taken into the Church) my bidding to work.

160. — 150. **On Deus Caritas I do it**. Skeat considers this

idiomatic expression as equivalent to, "I appeal to the text *God is love* (*I John* iv : 8) as my authority," and cites a later passage in the poem, *I do it on the Kinge, i.e.* I appeal to the King.

161. — 171. **Date et dabitur vobis.** "Give and it shall be given unto you." *St. Luke* VI, 38. The poet tells us that if we find truth we find love, for truth will tell us that love is the sovereign remedy, the most precious of virtues.

III. SONGS AND POEMS

The early English songs are full of interest to the student of literary history; but beyond this, they have often an unmistakably poetic quality which appeals to all who love and enjoy poetry for its own sake. In some of them, as in the famous *Cuckoo Song* (p. 161), we catch a frank delight in sunshine and in the green earth, a joyous freshness, which echoes, perhaps, the still earlier music of the folk-song. Many of these Middle-English lyrics are *religious*, the utterance of an age when religion held a large place in literature and in life; some are *lullabies*, some *drinking-songs*, some *love-songs*. Some, like the *Winter Song* (p. 164), are sombre and melancholy, but many are alive with the careless rapture of youth and springtime.

These songs are not strictly folk-songs, for they show some traces of conscious art and some acquaintance with foreign models. They were not the voice of an untaught peasantry; they were made by men belonging to the more educated classes, by monks, by minstrels, or by clerks, who had studied, perhaps at the University of Paris, or at Oxford. Nevertheless, the fact that these were not true songs of the people does not prove that the folk-song never flourished in England. On the contrary, we cannot doubt that the common people of England had their popular songs from a very early time, — how early no one can certainly say. We find allusions to such songs in the works of certain ancient writers; we find references to

them in certain early English laws, — but we have no definite knowledge of their origin, and the songs themselves have vanished almost as utterly as those who sang them. Probably these songs of the people were never written down, or, if some of them were recorded, the manuscripts have long since been lost. Here and there, indeed, we may find a refrain or a stray phrase which suggests a popular origin, or which seems like a chance survival of a long-buried world. In the older poetry, that strange charm, *Erce, erce, erce* (p. 1), suggests, or half-discloses, a world beyond the formal confines of literature. Here is a pagan rite, but little obscured by the Christian additions of a later time, an ancient heathen ceremony associated with the labors of the peasant, and suggestive of the primitive relation to the life-giving forces of the earth.

Whatever songs and ballads may have been anciently current among the English, we must remember that for about one hundred and fifty or two hundred years after the Norman Conquest, the French literature and culture were dominant. During this time the nation was submerged under the flood of foreign influences, and while many an English ploughman, maid, or lover, may have sung the old songs, or have made new ones, it was, nevertheless, the French poetry of the ruling class that got itself recorded.

It will be remembered that the thirteenth century (the century of Layamon's *Brut*, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, and many other poems) was marked by a growing tendency to use the English language in literature. As the earliest Middle-English songs which have been preserved date from the middle or latter half of the thirteenth century, we naturally connect this emergence of the English lyric with that revival of the vernacular literature which was a distinguishing feature of the time. On the other hand, we should realize, when we speak of the *Cuckoo Song* (*cir.* 1250) as "the earliest English Song," we mean simply that it is the earliest English song of the period which chance has preserved. Many of the best early English songs have been preserved in a manuscript volume which con-

tains a miscellaneous collection of Latin, Anglo-French, and English prose and verse. This collection, which is supposed to have been made at Leominster Priory, in Herefordshire, about 1310, is now in the British Museum (Harleian Ms. 2253). The English songs in this collection have been printed by Böddeker (*Altenglischer Dichtungen des Harlean Ms.* 2253), and most of them are also given by Wright, in his *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, Percy Society, 1842. See also *E. E. T.*, XLIX, XCVIII, CXVII, XXIV, and LIII. The *Early English Lyrics, Amorous, Divine, Moral, and Trivial*, edited by E. K. Chambers, and F. Sidgwick, Bullen, 1907, with notes and an article on "Mediæval Lyrics," is an admirable and valuable collection.

Canute's Song

This is one of the earliest examples, if not the earliest, of the songs of the people before the Norman Conquest. It appears in the *History of the Monastery of Ely* by Thomas of Ely, and in its written form dates from about 1167. The author of the History "tells how Canute the King 'going by boat to keep at Ely the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, looked up at the church that rose from a rock near the Ouse, and ordered the rowers to row slowly towards the land that he might hear the songs of the monks. Then calling his companions about him, he bade them sing with him, and, expressing with his own mouth the gladness of his heart, composed this little song in English.'" (Morley, *E. W.*, III, pp. 239–240.) See Professor Gummere's comments on this song and on its place in the history of the ballad, in his book *The Popular Ballad*, p. 58.

When the Nightingale Sings

It will be noted that this poem has not been so completely modernized as have many others in the collection. The exquisite melody of the original can really be preserved only by retaining the pronunciation of the final *e*'s and of other syllables now redundant, upon which it very largely depends.

PART THIRD

FROM CHAUCER TO WYATT AND SURREY

I. CHAUCER AND GOWER

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Nothing need be said here of Chaucer's life, character, or work, but it may not be superfluous to recall his general relation to the literature of his time. Chaucer's literary activity covers a period of about forty years, or from about 1360, or a little later, to his death in 1400. His chief contemporaries in poetry were therefore John Gower, William Langland (or, as some contend, the author of *Piers the Ploughman*), the unknown poet of *Sir Gawayne* and *The Pearl*, and the Scottish poet Barbour, the author of *The Bruce*. Broadly speaking, Gower may be classed with Chaucer, although greatly inferior to him in genius. Langland, or *Piers the Ploughman*, speaks for the social unrest and for the suffering poor, while in the poet of *The Pearl* and of *Sir Gawayne*, we find an utterance of the religious spirit of the Middle Ages, and of the world of medieval chivalry and romance, which was even then beginning to disappear. Chaucer neither champions the cause of the common people, nor does he, like the poet of *Sir Gawayne*, employ the old alliterative verse, or stand distinctively for the world of old-time romance. He begins life as a protegé of the Court; he is page, esquire, diplomat, at home among the ruling class. He is the child of aristocratic and of foreign influences. His masters in poetry are not English, but French and Italian. Yet Chaucer is not to be regarded as the mouthpiece of any class or as the mere product of certain influences. He was not a "product," but a man of genius, a strong and original personal-

ity. He borrowed from the French and the Italians, but the use he made of the materials he appropriated is even more important than the sources from which they were obtained. He is above all, and in spite of all, English, — English in his wholesome humour, in his sterling common sense, and in his unequalled portraiture of his time.

Chaucer was not only the first of the greater poets of England in point of time, he was the first great poet of London. In London he was born, in London he spent practically all of his busy life, and in London he died. There is a wider significance in this than might be supposed. In all the centuries before Chaucer, London, in spite of its commercial and political importance, had been of little or no consequence in literature. Notable writers or literary schools had appeared, now in the north, now in the south, now in the west, and literary works had been written in the dialect now of one section, now of another; but before Chaucer literature was provincial rather than national, for England had neither a literary capital nor any one form of English generally accepted throughout the land. Chaucer was the first of the great London men-of-letters, and from his time until now London has been the intellectual and literary centre of the English people. And Chaucer was the first of the greater poets to use that especial form or local variety of English which was destined to gain in importance, until, developed and enriched, it rose above all provincial competition, and became the recognized standard English of the English race.

The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse

The few selections here given from Chaucer give some notion of the development of his genius, and of his earlier and his later styles. *The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*, or *The Book of the Duchess*, written about 1369, is "the first of Chaucer's poems to which a definite date can be assigned"; the *Canterbury Tales* (represented here by the *Prologue* and a part of *The Pardoner's Tale*) was Chaucer's last work. The Duchess,

whose untimely death in 1369 was the occasion of Chaucer's poem, was Lady Blanche, the first wife of the poet's patron, John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III. The poem was evidently written under the influence of the French poets, Chaucer's early masters. It is unequal, and in places tedious, but contains some charming passages.

179. — 68. **Sterres seven.** Here, probably, Charles' Wain, or the seven brightest stars in the constellation of *Ursa Major*. "We that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars" (Shakspeare, *I Henry IV*, l. 2). The seven planets of the old astronomy (viz. the sun, the moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus, and Saturn) were also spoken of as the "seven stars." Chaucer himself uses the expression "seven stars" in this sense earlier in this poem (l. 408). In the passage now in question, however, as he has just declared the lady to be brighter than the sun, the moon, or any other planet, the "seven stars" can hardly mean seven planets, as this would involve a partial repetition of what has already been said.

The Parlement of Foules

For a general consideration of this poem and of the circumstances under which it was probably composed, see Root's *Poetry of Chaucer*, pp. 63 *et seq.*

181. — 677. **The note.** *I.e.* the tune. Cf. "I made this ditty and the note to it." Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, IV, 1. The phrase "change your note" is equivalent to "change your tune." Chaucer sets his words to a French air. Burns and Moore, it will be remembered, wrote many songs with some particular air in mind.

The Legend of Good Women

The works of Chaucer are commonly divided into three groups. The poems of the first group are all supposed to have been written before Chaucer visited Italy, or before 1372. Up to this time Chaucer had not come under the influence of

the Italian writers. This poem shows his indebtedness to the poets of France. The poems of the second period, which include *The Parlement of Foules* and *Troilus and Cressida*, show the influence of the Italian poets, especially of Dante and Boccaccio. The third period begins with *The Legend of Good Women*, which is followed by Chaucer's masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. *The Legend of Good Women*, like its great successor, consists of a number of separate stories introduced by a prologue. In the *Legend*, however, the stories are all selected to illustrate a single theme; they are all stories, taken from Ovid and various other sources, of women who have been victims or martyrs to love. The task of telling these stories is the "penance" imposed upon Chaucer in the prologue by Alceste (or Alcestis) for his offences against love in certain of his former works.

> "Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
> For thy trespas, and understonde it here;
> Thou shalt while that thou lyvest, yere by yere,
> The mostė partye of thy tyme spende
> In makyng of a glorious Legende
> Of goode wymmen, maydenės and wyves,
> That weren trew in lovyng al hire lyves;
> And telle of falsė men that hem bytraien,
> That al here lyf ne don nat but asayen."

Apparently the poem was planned to tell the stories of nineteen good women. Only nine stories have come down to us, however, telling the fate of ten martyrs to love. It is thought that Chaucer put the poem aside to work on *The Canterbury Tales*, and so left it unfinished. See *Introduction to The Legend of Good Women* in Skeat's ed. of *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* and Root's *Poetry of Chaucer*, p. 135.

182. — 16. **Bernarde, the monke.** *I.e.* St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091–1153). The sense is, even St. Bernard, one of the holiest and wisest men of his time, did not see everything. The passage is founded on a Latin proverb which appears in a marginal gloss in certain Mss. of Chaucer: "Bernardus monachus non vidit omnia." It is known from other sources that

this saying referred to St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and not to St. Bernard of Morlaix.

185. — 114. **Agenorès doghtre.** *I.e.* Europa, the daughter of King Agenor.

187. — 199. **Herber.** Here, as usual in Middle English literature, a resting place, or plot, covered with grass, or herbage. The "herber" in this case, was "benched on turvès fresh y-grave." This is usually supposed to mean that it was furnished with a kind of terrace, or elevation, covered with newly cut turf, which served for a seat. The more natural interpretation, however, is that benches, or seats, were placed upon the fresh turf. Cf. the description of an arbor in *The Flower and the Leaf*, ll. 49 *et seq.* (given on p. 228), and see "Arbour" in *N. E. D.*, and *Cent. Dict.*

189. — 245. **Absalon** is the Absalom of the Bible, here referred to because of the beauty of his hair (*II Sam.* xiv: 25–26). *Ester*, the Esther of the book of *Esther*, noted for her beauty (*Esther* ii: 7); *Penalopee* is Penelope the wife of Ulysses; *Marcia Catoun* is Marcia, the daughter of Cato Uticencis, great-grandson to Cato the Censor (v. Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer*, II, 294); *Ysoude* is Iseult, in the story of Sir Tristram, and *Helen* is Helen of Troy. *Lavyne* is Lavinia, who is introduced into the latter part of Vergil's *Æneid* (Bk. VII); she was the daughter of King Latinus, and after being betrothed to Turnus became the bride of Æneas. *Lucresse* is Lucretia, the heroine of the well-known Roman story; *Polixene* is Polyxena, the Trojan maiden, the beautiful and unfortunate daughter of Priam and Hecuba; *Cleopatra*, *Thisbe*, *Hero*, *Dido*, and *Laodamia* are all familiar instances of unhappy love and wifely devotion. *Phillis*, daughter of Sithon, King of Thrace, was deserted by her lover Demophoön, somewhat as Dido was deserted by Æneas; Phillis, like Dido, killed herself. *Canace*, the daughter of Æolus, was put to death for love; *Ysiphile* (or *Hypsipyle*), the Queen of Lemnos, was loved and deserted by Jason in his search for the Golden Fleece. *Ypermystre* is *Hypermnestra*, one of the fifty daughters of Danæus, who was

imprisoned by her father because, in disobedience to his command, she did not murder her husband, but suffered him to escape.

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

190. — 5. **Zephirus**. The classical personification of the west wind, noted for its mild and life-giving influence. Among the Romans he was identified with *Favonius*, the soft wind of the spring. Cf. *The Seasons*, p. 118, l. 16, *supra*. — 8. **Hath in the Ram**, *i.e.* in Aries, the first of the signs of the Zodiac. The sun passed through the Ram from March 12 to April 11, when it entered the sign of the Bull, or Taurus. That is to say, during April the sun's course was about half in the first sign and half in the second. Chaucer's meaning is that the young sun (*i.e.* the sun which had newly entered upon its annual progress) had run its half-course in the Ram, and had entered Taurus, *i.e.* it was past the eleventh of April. — **13. Palmers**. Pilgrims who had come back from the Holy Land, bringing palm-branches with them as tokens or holy relics of their pilgrimage. Here, apparently, pilgrims to any foreign or distant shrine. — 17. **Blissful martir**, *i.e.* Thomas à Becket, who was murdered at Canterbury in 1170, and whose shrine in Canterbury Cathedral was one of the most famous in medieval Europe. — 20. **The Tabard**. One of the oldest and most famous of the London inns. It was situated on the High Street of Southwark, and its location made it a convenient stopping-place and point of departure for travellers who were going southward from London into Surrey or Kent. It was largely patronized by pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Stow (writing in 1598) says: "In Southwark there be many fair inns for the receipt of travellers . . . amongst the which the most ancient is the Tabard, so called of the sign, which, as we now term it, is of a jacket or sleeveless coat, whole before, open on both sides, with a square collar, winged at the shoulders; a stately garment of

old time, commonly worn of noblemen and others. . . . But now these Tabards are only worn by the *heralds*."

191. — 51. **Alisaundre**. Alexandria in Egypt, which was taken by Pierre of Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1365. — 52. **Bord bigonne**, *i.e.* " he had been placed at the head of the daïs, or *table* (bord) of state." See Skeat's note on this much disputed phrase (from which the above explanation is made), in which several examples of this use of the expression are given; see also "Board" in *N. E. D.* — 53. **Pruce**. "When our English Knights wanted employment, it was usual for them to serve in Pruce, or Prussia, with the Knights of the Teutonic order, who were in a state of constant warfare with their heathen neighbors in *Lettow* (Lithuania), *Ruce* (Russia), and elsewhere" (Tyrwhitt). — 56. **Gernade**. The Knight had been in Grenada at the siege of *Algezir* (or Algeçiras), a seaport town near Gibraltar, which was taken from the Moors in 1344 by Alfonso XI, king of Castile. — 57. *Belmarÿe*, see note **192**. — 62, below.

192. — 62 **Tramyssene** and **Belmarÿe** . . . were Moorish kingdoms in Africa. *Lyeys*, a town in Armenia, was taken from the Turks by Pierre de Lusignan about 1367. *Satalÿe*, the town of Adalia or Attalia in Asiatic Turkey, was taken by the same leader about 1352. *Palatÿe*, or Palathia, is Anatolia in Asia Minor, and is not far from the island of Samos. It was held by the Christian Knights after the Turkish conquests. These particulars concerning the wars in which the Knight had been engaged seem intended to impress us with his faithfulness and prowess in the great wars between Christian Europe and heathendom. His sword had been turned against the heathen in distant parts of the world. He had fought three times in the lists as the champion against the heathen, and he had fought for the faith against the Moors in Spain, against the Mohammedan Turks in Asia Minor, and against the heathen Lithuanians. — 66. **Another heathen**, *i.e.* other than those infidels he had encountered in the lists at Tremezen (Tramyssene). — 70. **Vileynye**. Discourtesy, lack of gentle-

ness and consideration. For the history and meaning of this word, see Trench, *English Past and Present*, Chap. VII; Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and their Ways in English Speech*, p. 284. — 74. **His hors**. His horse was good, but he (the Knight himself) was plainly dressed. Some Mss. read, " His hors (pl.) weren good " (his horses were good). If this reading is adopted, the reference must be to the three horses belonging to the Knight and his two followers, the Squire and the Yeoman. — 80. **Bacheler**, *i.e.* one not yet admitted to knighthood, who is still in the probationary or preliminary stage.

193. — 107. **His arwès**. " The sense is: ' His arrows did not present a draggled appearance owing to the feathers being crushed;" *i.e.* the feathers stood out erect and regularly, as necessary to secure for them a good flight " (Skeat). — 115. **Cristophere**, *i.e.* a brooch with a figure of St. Christopher. The image of this saint was supposed to be a charm, or protection, against sudden or hidden dangers. Morley says: " It was part of the Mediæval faith, that he who had seen an image of St. Christopher was safe for the day against sudden or accidental death." In the legend of St. Christopher the poisoned arrows directed against the saint were powerless to injure him, but returned upon his persecutors. — 120. **Seintè Loy**, *i.e.* St. Elgius, or St. Eloy, Bishop of Noyon, patron saint of goldsmiths and farriers. It has been suggested that the Prioress, who seems to have been fond of jewelry, invoked him as the patron of goldsmiths, or more probably, because the oath " by St. Loy " was a very mild one for that time. — 125. **Stratford-attè-Bowe**. By the " scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe " Chaucer is supposed to mean the ancient Benedictine nunnery, or priory, of St. Leonard's at Bromley (or Bromley St. Leonards). Bromley was a small village about four miles east of the heart of old London, and only about half a mile south of the neighboring hamlet of Stratford-at-Bow. The priory of St. Leonards, says Bishop Tanner, " was in the parish of Bromley, but so near to the hamlet of Stratford Bow,

that *it is most commonly so called*. . . . No trace of any part of the buildings of the nunnery of St. Leonard's are now to be seen, except the chapel of St. Mary, which has been converted into a parish church." (Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, IV, 119.) The name Stratford-at-Bow is explained by the situation of the town. It was situated near an ancient *ford* over the river Lea (which flows south into the Thames), where the *stratum*, or Roman road, crossed the river. A bridge was afterwards erected at this point, called from its arch "Bow Bridge." Stratford, the town near the Bow Bridge, came to be distinguished as Stratford-at-Bow. — 126. **Frenssh of Parys**. The obvious meaning of this passage is that the Prioress spoke the provincial or Anglo-Norman French, as it was then spoken at the priory at Stratford-at-Bow; and that she used this especial form, not because it was the best, but because she was unacquainted with the French of Paris, which (we are led to infer) was superior. Skeat rejects this interpretation, and declares that no disparagement of the local or Anglo-Norman French is implied or intended. This novel and ingenious interpretation cannot be sustained. It not only destroys the ironic humor of the description and deprives it of all point, but it conflicts with certain passages in writers in and before Chaucer's time, which sustain the older and simpler interpretation. (See Lounsbury's *Chaucer*, II, 456; Hinckley's *Notes on Chaucer*, 10.) Chaucer's object is to make us see and know the Prioress, to acquaint us with her little peculiarities, her dress, her taste, her point of view. We must accordingly combine all the details of his description, put together all his stray hints, to make the complete picture. The Prioress was not without her harmless affectations. She thought a great deal about the impression she made upon others; she longed to be looked up to and held worthy of great respect. She tried very hard to imitate the manners of the Court, cultivated a dignified manner, and spoke French with ease. Why does Chaucer emphasize this last-named accomplishment? The ability to speak French was not uncommon

among the upper classes at that time. Chaucer's reason for telling us that the Prioress spoke French seems fairly clear. The Queen and the fine ladies at the Court spoke French, and we know how the Prioress regarded Court fashions. We may fairly infer that she prided herself upon her fluent French as a badge of breeding, an accomplishment which connected her with Court circles, and at the same time elevated her above the mass of common people who spoke English only. But, to get the full humour of the passage, we must follow Chaucer a step further. In the fourteenth century the Anglo-Norman French had become less pure; the standard French was the French of Paris. "Central or Parisian French was now the recognized standard on the Continent, *and the French of the English Court was not Norman, but as good French as the nobility could muster*" (Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and their Ways in English Speech*, 86). If this is true, our punctilious Prioress (who at best spoke the Anglo-Norman French then current), did not, with all her graces, speak the French of the aristocratic circles after all.

194. — 159. **A peire of bedès**, *i.e.* a set or string of beads. See "bead" and "pair," *Cent. Dict.* In this case the beads were of small coral, and were *gauded al with grene*, which may mean either that they were gayly decorated with green, or else, more probably, that the *gauders*, or larger beads in the string, were all of green. — 161. **Crownèd A.** "A" probably stood for *Amor*, or *charity*. The crown above the letter apparently signified that *Love* or *Charity* was the greatest of the Christian virtues. (Cf. *I Cor.* xiii.) — 164. **Chapèleyne**. Probably one who served in some minor capacity in the chapel, or perhaps acted as secretary or assistant to the Lady Superior. A nun would hardly be a chaplain in the ordinary sense of the word. — 165. **A Monk**. The gay, luxurious ecclesiastic, Prior Aymer, in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, obviously has points of likeness to Chaucer's Monk. Scott practically acknowledges his indebtedness to Chaucer, by placing some lines from the description of the Monk at the head of the chapter in which

Prior Aymer is introduced to the reader. — 165. **A fair for the maistrie**, *i.e.* a good one for the management of affairs; or, as we should say, well calculated to succeed. — 166. **Outridere.** Here simply one fond of riding out for hunting, or for pleasure.

195. — 173. **Seint Maure . . . seint Benéit.** St. Benedict (St. Beneit), who d. *cir.* 542, was the founder of the Benedictine order of monks. He established a monastery at Mont Cassino, and the regulations which he made for the monks (the "reule of . . . seint Beneit") were in time generally adopted by other monasteries throughout Europe. *Seint Maure* (*i.e.* St. Maur or Maurus), a young Roman patrician, was a prominent follower of St. Benedict, and ultimately became his successor. — 177. **That text.** Skeat points out that the word text "was used of any written statement that was frequently quoted." He adds: "The allusion is to the legend of Nimrod, 'the mighty hunter' (*Gen.* x, 9), which described him as a very bad man." He also cites the canons of King Edgar: "We enjoin that a priest be not a hunter, nor a hawker, nor a dicer." — 187. **Austyn**, *i.e.* St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and author of the *Confessions*. Certain rules for monastic life were deduced or compiled from the writings of St. Augustine; these were known as the Augustinian canons, and were adopted by many monastic fraternites. Chaucer's monk disdains the rule of St. Augustine as well as that of St. Benedict and St. Maure, as strict and behind the times. Skeat quotes from Wyclif as follows: "Seynt Austyn techith munkes *to labore with here hondis*, and so doth seint Beneit and seynt Bernard."

196. — 209. **Lymytour**, *i.e.* a friar allowed to beg within a certain prescribed district or limit. — 210. **Ordrès foure**, *i.e.* the *Dominican*, or Black Friars; the *Franciscans*, or Gray Friars; the *Carmelites*, or White Friars; the *Augustin*, or Austin, Friars. V. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life*, p. 293. — 220. **Licenciat**, *i.e.* he had been licensed by the Pope to hear confessions, grant absolution, and impose penance, independent of the local clergy.

197. — 254. **In principio.** The opening words of the Gospel of St. John, *In principio erat verbum*, were used by the friars as they entered a house on their rounds as a kind of salutation. Furnival quotes the following from Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More:* "Such is the limiter's saying of *In principio erat verbum*, from house to house." Skeat reminds us that "Harry Smith in Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*, Chap. III, refers to a certain priest as one that 'has a pleasant *in principio*,' etc." — 256. **Purchase . . . rente**, his purchase (or gains from begging) were larger than his *rente* (or income). In the English law an *estate by purchase* was one obtained by some other means than through inheritance. In some cases the word purchase had a similar meaning to *winnings*, *spoil*, *booty*, *i.e.* it was applied to property unlawfully acquired, or for which no adequate equivalent was given. — 257. **And rage he koude**, *i.e.* he could romp or play like a puppy. — 258. **Lovė-dayes**, *i.e.* days set apart for the settlement of disputes by arbitration or amicable agreement. Cf. "This day shall be a love-day, Tamora" (*Tit. Andron*, I, 491).

198. — 277. **Middelburgh and Orėwelle.** "Middleburgh is still a well-known port of the island of Walcheren in the Netherlands, almost immediately opposite Harwich, beside which are the estuaries of the rivers Stoure and *Orwell*. This spot was formerly known as the port of *Orwell* or *Orwelle*." (Saunders, p. 149.) — 278. **Sheeldės.** A French coin, worth about three shillings and fourpence, or four shillings. They were called *Shieldes* (O.F. *escuz*, F. *écus*) because they had the figure of a shield stamped on one side. The merchant acted as a banker, and understood how to make his own profit out of the exchange of foreign coin.

199. — 310. **Parvys**, in general, means, "a court or inclosed space in front of a church, a room over a church porch," etc. (Supposed to be connected with the word *Paradise*, L.L. *paradisus*, v. *Cent. Dict.*) Here, it means specifically the porch, or portico, in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where the lawyers were accustomed to meet for consultation.

See Saunders' *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, p. 103.— 314–315. **Assise.** Here a session (or sitting) of the circuit court. Henry II revived the practice of sending members of the King's Court (*Aula Regia*, or *curia Regis*) to hold assizes at various places throughout the kingdom. The *Aula Regia* was divided into the Court of King's Bench, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Exchequer, and up to Edward III's time these itinerant justices were chosen from judges of either the first or the second of these courts. But by a statute passed about forty years before Chaucer wrote his *Prologue* (14 Edward III, c. XVI), in order to promote the administration of justice in out-of-the-way places, it was provided that an assize might be held if necessary, *either* by a Judge of the King's Bench, or of the Common Pleas, *or by a King's Sergeant sworn* — the King's Sergeant to have the same authority as was above given to the justices of the one bench or the other. (Finlayson's ed., Reeve's *History of the English Law*, II, 302.) It was in this capacity that Chaucer's Sergeant had served. Chaucer says that the Sergeant held this high office "by patent and by pleyn (or full) commission." In this, it has been pointed out, Chaucer anticipated a decision given by the chief justice late in Edward III's reign, "that a judge of assize can be created by letters patent or commission under the great seal only." (See *Serviens ad Legem*, by James Manning, London, 1840. Pullings, *The Order of the Coif*, Boston, 1892; 2 Inst. 422.) — 318. **Purchasour.** Here means a conveyancer. The Sergeant is so skilled in the law of real estate that he is able, by a fiction of the law, to effect the conveyance of land held under certain conditions or restrictions which would ordinarily interfere with its sale, or transfer. All estates were therefore to him in fee simple, that is, as though they were free from such restrictions. — 327. **Coude he pleyn**, etc. Knew he fully by heart. — 331. **Frankeleyn.** Primarily a free man, but later and more definitely, a free landed proprietor who held directly from the crown, free from service to any other feudal superior. See Saunders' *Chaucer*, p. 133. —

340. **Seint Julian**. St. Julian Hospitator, the patron saint of hospitality, who aided travellers, and received and tended the sick and the poor. See Chambers, *Book of Days*, II, 388.

200. — 356. **Knyght of the shire.** " The representative in Parliament of a county at large, as distinguished from a representative of such cities and towns as are counties in themselves." (*Cent. Dict.*)

201. — 400. **By water**, etc. He sent them by water to wherever they came from, *i.e.* pitched them overboard, — made them walk the plank.

202. — 417–418. **Wel koude he**, etc. *I.e.* he well knew how to make fortunate the horoscope (" fortunen the ascendent ") of his patient by making images or characters stamped in metals or wax at a time when the stars were favorable. According to one account, these images were fitted to that part of the body affected by the disease. This practice Chaucer calls " *magik naturel*." Cf. the following passage from *The Hous of Fame*, III, 169–180:

> " Ther saw I pleyèn jogelours
> And clerkès eek, which connè wel
> Al this *magik naturel*,
> That craftèly don hir ententes,
> To make, *in certeyn ascendentes*,
> Imagès, lo! through swych magik,
> To make a man ben hool or syk."

429. **Esculapius**. *I.e.* Æsculapius, in Greek mythology the god and founder of the art of medicine. " The authors here mentioned wrote the chief medical text-books of the Middle Ages." (Wright.) Some account is given of these forgotten worthies in Saunders' *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, 115, and in Lounsbury's *Chaucer*, II, 393. — 440. **Sendal**. Cf. *The Debate of the Body and the Soul*, p. 128, l. 38, *supra*, and note. — 442. **In pestilence**, *i.e.* during the visitation of the terrible plague known as " Black Death." Cf. note to **213**, 19.

203. — 450. **To the offrynge**. As the word *offrynge* has more than one meaning, this passage is open to more than one

interpretation. Morris thinks that we "have here an allusion to the offering on Relic-Sunday, when the congregation went up to the altar in succession to kiss the relics." An offering, however, may mean simply "the act of going up to the altar to present alms." The important point is, however, that when the congregation came forward toward the chancel, the Wife of Bath insisted upon having a foremost place in the line of worshippers. — 460. **Chirchè dore**. "The priest married the couple at the church-porch, and immediately afterward proceeded to the altar to celebrate mass, at which the newly married persons communicated" (Morris). See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, 375 (Chatto and Windus). — 472. **Foot mantel**. A "foot-cloth, safeguard to cover the skirt" (Skeat). — 476. **The oldè daunce**, *i.e.* the old game, or all the old customs. Cotgrave quotes the French phrase, "Elle scait asses de la vielle danse."

204. — 491. **Suffisaunce**. Cf. the noble line in Chaucer's *Balades de Visage sans Peinture*, "And he that hath himself, hath suffisaunce," and the Parson in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, who was "passing rich with forty pounds a year." — 497. **Firste he wroghte**. *St. Matt.* v: 19. Cf. *Piers Ploughman*, C. XVI, 127. — 510. **Chaunterie** (or chantry) Lat. *cantate*, Fr. *chanter*, to sing. The word means either an endowment for the payment of a priest to sing or say mass for the souls of the dead (*i.e.* the donor, or those designated by him); or else the church, or chapel, in which such masses were celebrated. Dugdale says: "There were thirty-four of these chantries established at St. Paul's, which were served by fifty-four priests" (Hist. pref. 41). It makes little or no difference whether Chaucer (as is often asserted) here means the endowment, or the chapel or building, since the sense in either case is substantially the same. Chaucer's contemporary, Langland, says that since the land had been devastated by the pestilence, or the "Black Death," many parish priests deserted their parishes and went to London to make money by officiating in the chantries; see Prol. to *Piers Ploughman*, p 158, 81 ff, *supra*.

205. — 526. **Spicèd conscience.** There are several explanations of this obscure passage, but it is not unlikely that the exact force of the expression has been lost. Most commentators think that "spiced" here means "scrupulous," or "squeamish," or "over-fastidious," as the word is used in this sense by the dramatists Fletcher and Massinger, some two centuries later. According to this view, the Parson was not "scrupulous about non-essentials, . . . while easy about 'the weightier matters of the law'" (Corson). See also Skeat's *Chaucer*, and Hinckley's *Notes on Chaucer*. — 542–544. **Reve**, etc. A steward or a bailiff, as the *Reve* of a shire or sheriff, or, as in this case, the *Reve* of a manor. *Somnour*, "an officer who summoned delinquents before the ecclesiastical courts." *Pardoner*, one empowered to sell indulgences, or pardons. *Maunciple*, a caterer for a college, or for one of the Inns of Court.

206. — 562. **Tollen thriès.** Millers were allowed a certain proportion of the grain by their customers in payment for the grinding. This miller *tolled thrice*, *i.e.* took three times the proper, or legal, quantity of grain. — 563. **Thombe of golde.** This line has been the occasion of much discussion, but none of the explanations so far suggested are entirely convincing. It evidently refers to the proverb, "An honest miller has a thumb of gold," but the proverb itself is capable of more than one interpretation. Whatever the proverb may mean, Chaucer's allusion seems to be uncomplimentary to the miller's fair-dealing; he stole corn, he tolled thrice his lawful toll, and yet he had a thumb of gold. Gascoigne (*Steel Glass*, see p. 340, l. 278, and note), looking toward a more honest age, uses the same expression in an uncomplimentary sense:

"When millers toll not with a golden thumb."

209. — 666–667. **Gerland . . . alè stake.** The ale-stake was a pole fixed in the front of the tavern and projecting horizontally some distance above the ground. From this stake hung an ivy-bush (the usual sign of an inn) and often in addition to the bush a *garland* "made of three equal hoops

at right angles to each other, and decorated with ribands." The Sompnour's garland, adorned with flowers, while only a single circle or wreath, was as large round as a garland on an ale-stake. — 670. **Rouncivale**. The reference is clearly to the hospital of the Blessed Mary of Rouncyvalle, in the parish of St. Martin's in the fields at Charing (London), mentioned in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, II, 443 (Skeat). — 685. **Vernycle**. A small copy of the picture of the face of Christ, on a cloth or handkerchief, preserved for many centuries at St. Peter's, Rome. According to the legend, "the Saviour, at his passion, had his face wiped with a handkerchief by a devout female attendant, and . . . the cloth became miraculously impressed with the image of his countenance." Small copies of this portrait, known as *Veronicæ*, *Veroniculæ*, or in English *vernicles*, were often brought back from Rome by pilgrims as tokens of their journey. See "St. Veronica" in Chambers' *Book of Days*, and "vernicle" and "veronica" in *Cent. Dict.*

210. — 719. **Belle**. Presumably the name of an inn: possibly it should be Bull. "Stowe mentions an inn named the Bull as being near the Tabard; but I have found no mention of the Bell" (Wright).

212. — 785. **To make it wys**. *I.e.* "to make it a matter of wisdom or deliberation" (Skeat).

213. — 826. **Warteryng of Seint Thomas**. Or St. Thomas-a-Watering, a brook where horses were watered, which crossed the road taken by the pilgrims to St. Thomas's shrine (*i.e.* to Canterbury) near the second milestone. — 835. **Draweth out**. To draw lots. "These cuts are usually made of straws unequally cut, which one hides between his fingers and thumb, whilst another draws his fate" (Skeat).

The Pardoner's Tale

An excellent account of this little masterpiece of tragic intensity and narrative skill, will be found in Root's *Chaucer*, pp. 222–231. The *Pardoner's Tale* and its *Prologue* have been edited for the Chaucer Society (Second Series, No. 35), and

Jusserand has contributed a paper on "Chaucer's Pardoner and the Pope's Pardoners" to the publications of the same society (Second Series, No. 19). The portion of the *Tale* here omitted consists of an attack upon swearing, gluttony, gambling, and other deadly sins. It serves as a kind of prologue to the story of the three drunken revellers, but it is not an essential part of the story itself.

215. — 2. **Primė.** In general *prime* means "the first quarter of the day, or the period from 6 to 9 A.M." Prime was also one of the "Canonical Hours" that is, one of those stated times of the day at which the services of the Church were held. It followed after *matins* and *lauds*. That Chaucer refers here to the canonical hour for the service of prime is evident from his allusion to the ringing of the bell. See Skeat's notes on Chaucer's use of *prime*, and *Cent. Dict.* — 4. *Bellė clynke.* "A hand bell was carried before a corpse at a funeral by the sexton" (Skeat). — 19. **Pestilence.** Probably the first of the four great plagues which devastated England in the fourteenth century, that is, the plague of 1348–1349. This great plague was severely felt throughout a large part of Europe; it is the one described by Boccaccio in the *Decamerone.*

216. — 55. **God yow see,** *i.e.* keep you in His sight, watch over you, or protect you.

221. — 239. **Avycen,** *i.e. Avicenna* (980–1037), a celebrated Arabian physician whose medical works were long used in the universities of Europe. — 240. **Fen.** Avicenna's treatise the *Canon*, or *The Book of the Canon of Medicine*, is divided into books and sections, "and the Arabic word for 'section' is in the Latin version denoted by *fen* from the Arabic *fann*, a part of any science" (Skeat). Skeat objects to Chaucer's expression as "not quite correct," as "he seems to have taken canon in its usual sense of rule, whereas it is really the title of the whole work." But Chaucer may mean that Avicenna never wrote in his book (or canon of medicine), or in any *fen* or part of his book, not even in that part in which he specifi-

cally treats of poisons (Bk. 4, fen 1) of " mo wonder signes of empoisonyng."

The Compleynt of Chaucer to his Purse

" This delightful poem, which with delicate humor applies the conventional language of amorous poetry to an empty purse, is probably among Chaucer's latest compositions. The envoy at any rate, addressed to Henry IV as ' conquerour of Brutès Albioun,' cannot have been written earlier than September 30, 1399, when Parliament formally acknowledged . . . Henry's right to the throne " (Root's *Chaucer*, p. 78).

The Ballad of Good Counsel, or Truth

This also is a poem of Chaucer's later years, — the years in which he knew poverty and adversity. It was not Chaucer's nature to take the world into his confidence; like Shakespeare he is objective, telling us little about his inner life and personal opinions. But here, for once, he reveals his heart, giving us his mature verdict on life, and we feel that here at least we touch for a moment the man Chaucer as he was. It has been remarked by the critics that the Ballad is partly based on certain passages in Boethius' *Consolations of Philosophy*, and Professor Skeat refers to *St. John*, viii: 32: " And ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free*," as the original of *And trouthè shal delivere*, in the line which recurs as the refrain of the poem. But the resemblances to *Boethius* are slight and of no great importance, and the resemblance to the passage in St. John consists rather in a verbal similarity than in an identity of meaning. By *truth*, St. John means distinctly the truths of Christianity, whereas Chaucer means something wider and less definite. Toward the close of his active career, Chaucer expresses his weariness of the shams, the bitter rivalries, the luxury, and the envyings of the world and the Court, and turns with relief to *sothfastnesse*, — the substantial world of reality, or *truth* — that shall deliver him.

Lay aside avarice and lust of gain, and reality will certainly set you free. And again, *truth* is not merely reality, but righteousness. Do not torment yourself to set the crooked straight; reform yourself, you who fuss and fret to reform the world, and trust truth, — that power of righteousness, — stronger than the power of man, to mend and liberate,

"And trouthè shal delivere it is no drede."

Though we should strive to set things right here, we cannot. In this world we must have troubles, its weakness provokes a fall; endure patiently, thankfully, as a pilgrim who passes through a wilderness, looking on high to the end of the journey, and truth will deliver you. See Root's *Chaucer*, p. 73, and cf. Langland's tribute to *truth* (p. 160, ll. 149 ff. in this volume), and the various poems (as *The Lie*, ascribed to Raleigh) on the vanity of the courtier's life, and the longing for truth and simplicity.

JOHN GOWER

Chaucer and Gower were long looked up to as the two most eminent poets of their day. Many of the chief poets of the fifteenth century — Occleve, James I, Dunbar — acknowledge their debt to Gower, as well as to Chaucer, and speak of the two poets with almost equal reverence. So late as the latter part of the sixteenth century, Sir Philip Sidney speaks of "Gower and Chaucer" as the two great pioneers among the English poets. This traditional association of Chaucer and Gower has lasted down to our own day. But, while it has become a convention to speak of the two poets together, the association has become largely formal, and in reality Chaucer is loved and studied, while Gower is but seldom read. No one with any trace of poetry in his composition can turn from the living art of Chaucer to the interminable moralizings of his solemn contemporary, and not feel that there are good reasons for this, which no argument is likely to overcome. Yet if we study Gower for himself, apart from his greater contemporary,

we find that he is by no means without interest as a man, and that even his works (formidable and dull as they undoubtedly are) have been unduly neglected. Gower was born in or about 1325. He died in 1408. He was, therefore, some fifteen years older than his friend Chaucer, and he survived him for eight years. He came of a Kentish family. He was in comfortable circumstances (owning lands in Norfolk and Suffolk), and he appears to have spent the greater part of his life in London. Towards the end of his life he had lodgings in the old Priory in St. Mary's in Southwark, not far from the Tabard Inn, and he was buried in the Priory church, now St. Saviour's, where his tomb can still be seen. He was a man of considerable learning for his time, and an indefatigable writer. His principal poems are the *Speculum Meditantis*, in French, the *Vox Clamantis*, in Latin, and the *Confessio Amantis*, in English. Judging from these works, Gower and Chaucer looked at the world with very different eyes. In his poems Gower reveals himself as a sincere patriot, and a zealous reformer. He impresses us as a man of deeply serious nature and lofty aims, a born preacher, but devoid of any saving sense of humour. Chaucer addressed him as " O moral Gower," and he is called " the moral Gower " to this day. It is more gracious to please than to rebuke, to amuse than to instruct; it may even be that Chaucer's fun and human sympathy d d more for England than Gower's didacticism. Yet there is something in Gower that commands our respect, and his place in the life and literature of his time is deserving of something more than a formal recognition. (See *Cambridge Eng. Lit.*, Vol. II, Chap. VI, and accompanying bibliography; Morley's *E. W.*, IV, p. 150; and, for an amusing but severe attack on Gower's poetry, Lowell's essay on " Chaucer," *Prose Works*, III, 329.)

The Praise of Peace

This poem was addressed to King Henry IV upon his accession, October, 1399, and was therefore written during the latter part of that year. Mr. E. B. Nicholson suggested the sub-

stitution of an English title, *The Praise of Peace*, for the Latin one, *De Pacis Commendatione*, which appears in the manuscript. The full title, as given in the colophon, was as follows: *Explicit carmen de pacis commendacione, quod ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini Regis Henrici quarti, suus humilis orator Johannes Gower composuit.* Passages in Gower's writings (*Vox Clamantis*, *Confessio Amantis*, and *Cronica Tripartita*) show that the poet had been greatly troubled by the abuses and misgovernment of Richard's II's reign, and that his early hopes for the youthful Richard had been changed into bitter disappointment. (See *Cambridge Eng. Lit.*, II, 156.) When Henry IV came to the throne, the old poet's hopes revived, and in *The Praise of Peace*, he welcomed the new king as one who would bring in a new and better time. As Mr. G. C. Macaulay says: In this poem "the author's ideal of a King, as one who above all things should promote peace at home and abroad, is set forth with the enthusiasm of one who, after long waiting, at length sees his hopes for his country fulfilled."

II. ENGLISH FOLLOWERS OF CHAUCER

Chaucer's influence on the course of English poetry may be compared to that of Dryden three centuries later; indeed, it was probably even more extended and unquestioned. All through the fifteenth century, Chaucer dominated the poetry not only of England, but of Scotland as well. His successors seemed proud to call him father and master; they copied his manner, and were often influenced by his example in the choice of themes. So faithfully did they follow in his footsteps that it was not always easy for the uncritical reader to distinguish the work of the pupil from that of the master. So it happened that many poems composed under Chaucer's influence were for a long time ascribed to Chaucer himself. This confusion (as Skeat points out) was largely due to the inclusion of numerous poems by writers of the Chaucerian school in an early

edition of Chaucer's works (1532). This book was, says Skeat, "a collection from the works of Chaucer *and other writers*." But as this practice of including non-Chaucerian poems in editions of Chaucer was followed by later editions, and as no clear distinction was drawn between those pieces that were by Chaucer and those that were not, all the poems naturally came to be received as Chaucer's work. Some of the poems thus incorporated with the works of Chaucer were by well-known writers such as Gower and Lydgate, but the authors of others are now unknown.

The Flower and the Leaf is one of the best of these anonymous poems of the Chaucerian school. No manuscript of it is known to exist, and it was first included in the printed works of Chaucer by Speght in 1597–1598. Skeat remarks that it is one of the few poems previous to 1500 which purport to have been written by a woman. The language shows it to be later than 1400, and it is "conjecturally put at about the middle of the fifteenth century." It contains about 600 lines. It was modernized by Dryden (who believed it to be Chaucer's) in 1700, by Lord Thurlow in 1822, and by Powell (assisted by Wordsworth) in 1841.

A brief selection from Dryden's version, with its characteristic eighteenth-century embellishments, may be of interest:

> "Thus as I mused, I cast aside my eye,
> And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
> The spreading branches made a goodly show,
> And full of opening blooms was every bough:
> A goldfinch there I saw with gaudy pride
> Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from side to side,
> Still pecking as she pass'd; and still she drew
> The sweets from every flower, and suck'd the dew:
> Sufficed at length, she warbled in her throat,
> And tuned her voice to many a merry note,
> But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,
> Yet such as sooth'd my soul, and pleased my ear."

229. — 49. **Herber.** See note **187**, 199, *supra*. In the present instance, however, the *herber* has a roof.

SIR THOMAS CLANVOWE

The Cuckoo and the Nightingale

Sir Thomas Clanvowe, to whom this poem is attributed, was a gentleman of Herefordshire, a courtier in the reign of Richard II, and Henry IV, and a friend of the young "Prince Hal," afterwards Henry V. The date of the poem is placed between 1403 and 1410, or shortly after the death of Chaucer. It has been compared to *The Owl and the Nightingale* (see p. 136, *supra*), and, as Professor Skeat points out, Milton evidently had it in mind when he wrote his youthful sonnet *To the Nightingale*. The first two lines of the passage here given ("The god of Love, A! benedicite!" etc.) are borrowed from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, ll. 927–928. For the whole of *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* see Skeat's *Chaucerian and other Pieces;* and for Clanvowe consult the "Introduction" to the same volume.

JOHN LYDGATE

John Lydgate was not only an admirer and imitator of Chaucer's works, he appears to have known Chaucer personally and to have gone to him for help and criticism, so that the master might "amende and correct the wronge traces of" his "rude penne." Lydgate got his name from his birthplace, the village of Lydgate in Suffolk, near the border of Cambridgeshire. He was born about 1370, or about thirty years after the birth of Chaucer, and died about the middle of the fifteenth century. Lydgate became a monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's, situated some eight miles from his native village. In his *Lament for the Makers* Dunbar alludes to him as "the monk of Bury" (see p. 266), and groups him with Chaucer and Gower. Lydgate has been called "the most productive and multifarious poet of his century." It has been estimated that his extant works (including the ponderous *Troy Book* and *The Falls of the Princes*) reach to a total length of about 140,000 lines. Except to the special student, Lydgate is now but little more than a name. So vast is the bulk

of his poetical production that it has sunk beneath the surface well-nigh submerged by its own weight. Yet despite the diffuseness of his style and the roughness of his verse, there is a vein of true poetry in Lydgate; and, as in *The Testament*, the thrill of a deep and genuine feeling. (See "Lydgate" in *D. N. B.* for life and bibliography.)

THOMAS HOCCLEVE OR OCCLEVE

Thomas Hoccleve (or Occleve) was born about 1368–1370. He was therefore exactly, or almost exactly, the same age as his fellow disciple of Chaucer, Lydgate, with whom he is commonly associated. The place of his birth is uncertain, but his life was chiefly passed in London, where, like his master Chaucer, he held a government position, being one of the clerks in the office of the Keeper of the Privy Seal. This post he held for over thirty years. According to his own account in a poem called *La Male Regle*, he was over-fond of pleasure in his youth, he loved drinking and good eating, and while his earnings were very small, he was inclined to be lavish with the little that he had. Hoccleve appears to have been a man of weak but amiable character, and he tells us about himself, his follies, his sickness, his troubles, his repentance, with a frankness and simplicity that often win our sympathy and our interest. His most pretentious work is *The Regimen of Princes*, a long didactic poem, composed about 1411–1412, and dedicated to Prince Henry, the future King Henry V. The *Prologue* to this poem contains many autobiographical confessions, as well as the familiar passage on Chaucer, his "master dear and father reverent." These lines to Chaucer are not merely the tribute of a follower to one who was his model and master in the art of poetry; they are rather touched with the grief and respect of a personal loss. Chaucer is Hoccleve's "Father" as well as "master," and many things suggest to us that the bond between the two poets was one of personal affection as well as of literary discipleship. The human interest and true feeling in the *Prologue* have still power to touch us, while the long moral

disquisition of *The Regimen of Princes* leaves us cold. About 1416–1421 Hoccleve went mad; and although he recovered, his old friends turned from him, and he was forgotten. This illness and its lessons is the subject of his poem *The Complaint* p. 238). In 1424 Hoccleve was granted a "corrody," *i.e.* he was given the right to be maintained at a certain monastery, and so provided for, in his declining years. According to the trad.tional belief, he lived for some twenty-five years after retiring from his clerical duties, dying about the middle of the century, or about the same time as his brother-poet, Lydgate. The selections given in the text are taken from a collection of Hoccleve's "Minor Poems," edited by Dr. F. J. Furnival, *E. E. T.*, extra series, LXI.

Thomas Hoccleve's Complaint

238. — 2. **Seoun of Michlaemessé.** — In the Roman and Anglican churches the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, or Michaelmas, falls on September 29.

240. — 8. **In the Psalter.** *Psalm* xxxi: 11, 12, cf. also *Psalm* lxxxviii.

A Lament for Chaucer

242. — 36. **Cumber-world.** *I.e.* Death, the encumberer, burden, or hindrance of the world. *Cumber-world* also means a useless person or thing, an encumbrance in the world; Drayton, *Eclogues*, II.

243. — 53. **Firstè finder.** Probably means here *first-discoverer*, not the first poet of our language, as the expression is sometimes explained. Of course Chaucer did not literally discover the English language; but he was the first great poet to disclose, or discover, its resources. Moreover, he trusted his native tongue, when some of his contemporaries were doubtful or were still writing in Latin, or in French. Gower, for instance, wrote three long poems, one in Latin, one in French, and one in English; and the rise of English prose was just

beginning under Wyclif and some others. Similarly, Chaucer speaks of " Pictagoras " as the " first finder " (or discoverer) of " the art of song " (*Dethe of Blaunche*, l. 1168). — 70. **I have here his likeness.** An allusion to the well-known portrait of Chaucer as an old man, which Hoccleve had painted on the margin of the manuscript (Harl. Ms. 4688) opposite to this stanza. Ward (" Chaucer," p. 3, *E. M. L.*) says that Hoccleve painted this picture himself, but Hoccleve tells us that he caused it to be made (Do makè), and implies that he assisted the artist by his vivid remembrance of Chaucer's appearance.

Chanson to Somer

This graceful little poem is addressed to Sir Henry Somer, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of Hoccleve's friends and patrons. The poem thus turns upon the pun on the words " somer " and " summer." It is both a delicate tribute to Somer and a clever reminder of Hoccleve's dependence upon his patron.

STEPHEN HAWES

Stephen Hawes was a court poet during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. He is thought to have been born in Suffolk, probably about 1474–1475, and he is known to have died before 1530. He studied at Oxford, travelled abroad, and returned " a complete gentleman " and " a master of several languages." Henry VII, who esteemed him " for his facetious discourse and prodigious memory," gave him a place in the royal household. His principal works are his two didactic and allegorical poems, *The Pastime of Pleasure* and *The Example of Virtue;* he also wrote a number of minor poems.

In actual time Hawes stands about midway between two great epochs; the age of Chaucer, and the age of Spenser and Shakespeare. We may find his poetry tedious, but historically Hawes is a link between Chaucer and Spenser, and in reading *The Pastime of Pleasure* we are almost equally impressed with its reminiscences of the old romances and with its dim antici-

pation of the glories of the *Faerie Queene*. The purpose of *The Pastime of Pleasure* is similar to that of a morality play, or, indeed, to *Pilgrim's Progress;* it is designed to show in an allegory " the course of man's life in this world." The life of noble endeavor, of the world out of the cloister, is personified, or illustrated by a knight called *Graunde Amour*. He is trained in knowledge and in chivalry, encounters and vanquishes temptations, meets and marries a beautiful lady, *La Belle Pucel*, and after living happily with her dies in his old age, attended by *Contrition* and *Conscience*, buried by *Mercy* and *Charity*. *Remembraunce* makes a " little epitaphy " of his grave, a part of which is given in the text. While he speaks respectfully of Gower and Chaucer, Hawes repeatedly alludes to Lydgate, " the monk of Bury," as his master. *The Pastime of Pleasure* has been edited by Thomas Wright for the Percy Society; it is also given in Southey's *Early British Poets*. For Hawes' life, see Anthony à Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*.

244. — 1. **O Earth! on earth**, etc. The resemblance between the first three stanzas here given and the poem on *Earth* (p. 170, *supra*) is so close that it can hardly be accidental.

245. — 36. **The pompėd carkės**. I have adopted the emendation of this line suggested by Mr. Murison (see *Cambridge Hist. Eng. Lit.* II. 269). The usual reading — " The pomped clerkes with foles delicious," if not " absolutely without meaning," is at best suspiciously obscure. *Pomped carkes* = pampered carcase, or body. *Pomp* and *pomped* are variants of *pamp*, to gorge, or to cram; they should not be confused with *pomp*, display, splendor. See N. E. D. *pomp*, *pamp*.

III. SCOTTISH POETS AFTER CHAUCER

KING JAMES I

The fifteenth century was a memorable one in Scottish literature. From about 1425, the example and influence of Chaucer began to affect the poetry of Scotland; the poetry of the Eng-

lish Court and capital was carried beyond the Border, and a remarkable succession of poets arose in the Scottish Lowlands, — *King James I*, *Henryson*, *Dunbar*, and others, — who took up and continued the poetic tradition of Chaucer and his French masters. This spread of Chaucer's influence in Scotland was largely due to James I, the earliest of Chaucer's Scottish followers. This prince, it will be remembered, had been brought into direct contact with the English poetry and culture by the singular chances of his career. In 1405, when he was in his eleventh year, he fell into the hands of King Henry IV, who, for political reasons, detained him in England. He was not formally released until 1423, eighteen years later, when Henry V was on the throne. At first James was imprisoned in the Tower, but later he was less strictly confined and given ample opportunities for a liberal education. He had come to England a lad of eleven, he left it a man of nearly thirty. He loved music and poetry; he grew to manhood in a land and at a time in which the poetry of Chaucer and Gower was read, admired, and often imitated, by people of the upper and cultured classes, so James read, admired, and imitated them also, taking them for his " maisters dear " and commending their souls to heaven.

In 1424, James (who by this time had become the lawful sovereign of Scotland) was married to Lady Jane Beaufort, a kinswoman of Henry V. Shortly after he returned to Scotland as king. In 1437 he was brutally murdered by a band of Scottish nobles, after a vigorous rule of twelve years. His poem, *The King's Quair* (or King's Book), is a love-allegory. Together with much mythological and other matter, he describes the King's captivity, his first sight of his lady (Jane Beaufort), as she walked in the garden " faste by the Touris wall," and the happy end of his suit. He thanks his fortunate exile, he thanks the very castle wall, for through all adventures he has gained his heart's health and comfort. The only extant manuscript text of the *King's Quair* is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It is thought to date from the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In the manuscript the poem is declared

[illegible]

[illegible]

The King's Quiet

[illegible]

A Ballad of Good Counsel

[illegible]

ROBERT HENRYSON

Robert Henryson, or Henderson, was not only one of the most eminent and successful imitators of Chaucer, he was also a poet of independent and original power. His inspiration was not drawn wholly from books; he excelled in more than one province of poetry, and besides continuing the Chaucerian tradition, he, in his turn, gave a fresh impulse to certain kinds of poetical composition. In *The Tale of Orpheus* and in *The Testament of Cresseid*, he follows in the footsteps of his English master; but in his rustic dialogue *Robene and Makyne*, commonly classed as the earliest English pastoral, he is himself a master, rather than a pupil. His *Fables* — more vigorous, I think, than Gay's, and not unworthy of comparison with La Fontaine's — are not mere echoes, but old things are made new. In telling these old fables, Henryson shows a sense of humour, an ability to see with his own eyes, and a dramatic vigour, that entitle him to a high place among the masters of narrative poetry. Henryson had also a good ear for melody; he has even been called the earliest "pure lyrist among the Scottish poets." (See "Henryson" in *D. N. B.*) He thus holds an honored and important place in the moral fable, the pastoral, (or pastoral-ballad), and the lyric.

Of Henryson himself almost nothing is known. He is supposed to have been born about 1425, and to have died about 1506. He was certainly a schoolmaster at Dunfermline; and as he was "probably" in holy orders, it is conjectured that "he held a clerical appointment within Dunfermline Abbey." He was a Master of Arts, and as his name does not appear on the lists of either of the two universities then in Scotland, he is inferred to have taken his degree abroad. Henryson's death is referred to in Dunbar's *Lament for the Makers* (p. 267), written before 1508. Henryson's *Poems and Fables* have been collected and edited by David Laing.

Complaint of Cressid

This, as the poet himself suggests, is a continuation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*. The poem contains 616 lines, only the conclusion being here given. The terrible fate of the faithless and once beautiful Cressida, deserted by Diomede, stricken with leprosy and compelled to consort with the lepers, is told with tenderness and tragic power. The poet, musing on her story, as told by the master Chaucer, pities her " mischance."

> " Yit nevertheless, quhat-ever men deme or say
> In scornful langage of thy brukilnes,
> I sall excuse, als far-furth as I may,
> Thy womanheid, thy wisdom, and fairness,
> The quilk Fortoun hes put to sic distres
> As hir pleisit, and na-thing throw the gilt
> Of thee, throw wikkit langage to be spilt."

The *Testament* was included in Thynne's edition of Chaucer, 1532.

The Tale of the Paddock and the Mouse

258. — 89. **The murther-aith**. This is apparently an oath by which a person solemnly binds himself not to murder or injure another, or deceive him to his hurt. The oath is referred to as though it were well known, but I can find no other direct reference to it. The following oath, of a somewhat similar character, was taken by persons who were suspected of murder or felony, and admitted to bail. While this form belongs ostensibly to the reign of Queen Elizabeth there is good reason to suppose that it dates from an earlier time.

"*The Oath of such as are to be bayled upon supposition for Felony or Murder.*"

"I A. B. shall from henceforth during all my life, be true Liegeman, and true faith beare unto our Soveraigne Ladie *Elizabeth*, and to her Heires and Successors Kings and Queenes of this Realme; and shall commit no Murder, Treason, or Misprision of Treason, nor consent or agree to any such Offence, nor shall know any perill or damage to his Grace or to the

Realme, or other Dominions aforesaid, but shall reveale and disclose it with all speed unto such as have the Lawes in Government; nor shall commit any Felony or Murder or be accessary to any such Offence or Offences: but shall live a good and obedient Subject during my life. So helpe me God, and the Contents of this Booke" (*The Book of Oaths and the Several forms thereof*, etc. London, 1649).

WILLIAM DUNBAR

William Dunbar, now often ranked as the greatest poet of Scotland before Burns, was born about 1460, in the Scottish Lowlands, not far from Edinburgh. He is supposed to have been sent to St. Andrews, and to have received the degree of B.A. from that university in 1477, and of M.A. two years later. Though come of a noble family, Dunbar appears to have been poor, or at least dependent upon his own exertions. After leaving the university, he became a novice in the Franciscan order of Friars. For some years he led the life of a working friar, "making good cheer in every flourishing town in England between Berwick and Calais," preaching at Dernton and Canterbury, and even crossing to France. By 1500 he was back in Scotland, a pensioner of King James IV, who appears to have employed him on various embassies. He had abandoned the friar's gown and become a priest; he lived on the king's bounty; he wrote poems on state occasions, such as *The Thrissil and the Rose*, and virtually, if not technically, seems to have held a position similar to that of Poet Laureate. In numerous poems he appealed to the king for a more substantial reward for his services. The king's defeat and death at Flodden Field in 1513 appears to have been a heavy blow to Dunbar's fortunes. He is thought to have survived this national disaster some seven years, and to have written many of his religious poems during this time.

Famous in his own age, he was for a long time neglected and almost forgotten. His poems were not reprinted until the latter part of the eighteenth century, and no complete edition of them

appeared until as late as 1834. Sir Walter Scott placed him on a level with Chaucer, and declared that he was "unrivalled by any (poet) which Scotland ever produced." Lowell, on the other hand, found him "tedious and pedantic," and declared that what Dunbar "means for humour is but the dullest vulgarity." Scott was certainly nearer the truth than Lowell, but it is not unlikely that in his enthusiasm for a poet long neglected and even then little read, he was too generous in his praise. Dunbar's poetry is so varied in quality and character, its range from the height of beauty or solemn meditation to the depth of repulsive vulgarity or scurrilous license is so wide, that a just estimate of him could only be formed after a dispassionate and comprehensive study of his entire works. Yet whether we are attracted or disgusted, we cannot but be impressed by Dunbar's magnificent command of language, and by his abounding and masculine power.

No Treasure without Gladness

260. — 10. **For warldés wrack**, etc. Wrack (or wreck) means here *trash, refuse*. The sense is: "But (*i.e* without) welfare, spiritual well-being, gladness, contentment, the world's wealth (which is but *wrack* or dross) avails nothing." — 12. **Remanent all**, etc. All that remains (*i.e.* the surplus wealth which you do not spend), you only possess with sorrow.

261. — 33. **Though all the wealth**, etc. "There is one expression in it (this poem) which ought to be remembered, as containing more good sense than some systems of ethics:

> . . . no more thy pairt dois fall,
> Bot meit, drink, clais, and *of the laif a sight.*

In modern language Dunbar would have expressed himself thus:

> What riches give us, let us then explore;
> Meat, drink, and clothes; what else? a sight of more!"
> *Hailes*, quoted in Laing's ed., II, 346.

To a Lady

Alexander Smith says of this poem: "It is turned with much skill and grace. The constitutional melancholy of the man comes out in it; as, indeed, it always does when he finds a serious topic. It possesses more tenderness and sentiment than is his usual. It is the night-flower among his poems, breathing a mournful fragrance." (*Dreamthorp*, essay on "Dunbar.")

The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins

The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins has been called Dunbar's masterpiece. When we recall Dunbar's successes in poetry of a widely different character, such an assertion seems unnecessarily dogmatic; it is enough to say that the *Dance* is preëminent among his satirical and allegorical poems. The theme is a striking one. The Devil selects the eve of Lent, — a time when men, looking forward to the season of long fast and penance, were fond of indulging in the maddest license and buffoonery — for a dance of the lost souls. It is the eve of Shrove-tide, — that is, the time when the faithful on earth are shriven, or absolved from sin, — but these who dance in the air at the Devil's bidding are the unshriven, whose time for pardon has passed. The Seven Deadly Sins begin the wild dance, Pride (the sin that caused the fall of Lucifer) taking the lead. These deadly, or mortal sins, must have had a positive personality in the popular imagination at this time. They had been graphically presented in Langland's *Piers the Ploughman*, and it is not unlikely that they figured in the religious pageants. At a later period Spenser introduces into the *Faerie Queene* the Deadly Sins, passing in a procession from the palace of Pride. The idea of a dance of Sins, a device by which mirth and revelry were placed in a grotesque juxtaposition with horror and despair, may possibly have been borrowed from the medieval Dance of Death. In any case, we are chiefly concerned with the use Dunbar makes of his materials. The time, the place, the unearthly and doomed masquers, all combine to produce an

effect similar, but superior, to the dance of the witches in *Tam O'Shanter*.

262. — 6. **Mahoun**. *I.e.* the Devil. The word *Mahoun* is one of the numerous early forms of *Mahomet*, or *Mohammed*, the Arabian prophet. In the Middle Ages heretics and false prophets were looked upon as instigated by or in league with Satan, and so Mahomet was identified or confused with the Devil. See also "Maumet," "Mammet," in *Cent. Dict.* — 8. **Fastern's even**. The same as fastens-eve, the evening preceding Lent, or *Shrove-Tuesday*. It was a season of riotous festivity. Selden writes, "What the church debars us one day she gives us leave to take out another. First there is a Carnival, and then a Lent." See "Shrove-Tide," in Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, from which the above quotation is taken. — 11. **To cut up capers**, etc. The original is: "and kast up gamountis in the skyiss." *Gamountis* (gambols, capers) is allied to the French *gambade*. Warton quotes the following from a memoir concerning the progress of the Princess Margaret into Scotland: "The Lord of Northumberland made his *devoir*, at the departynge, of *gambades* and lepps (leaps), as did likewise the Lord Scrope, the father, and many others that returned agayne, in taking their *congee*." — 12. **In France**. The intimate relations which existed between Scotland and France are a matter of familiar history. When Dunbar wrote, French fashions were in vogue at the Scottish court. — 18. **Vastie wanis**. "As if he would lay dwellings in ruins — *i.e.* knock everything to destruction" (Gregor).

264. — 66. **Brief of richt**. *I.e.* by *Breve of Recto*, a writ which in feudal Scotland established a right to succession. — 67. **Heilan' Padyane**. "This whole stanza is employed in satirizing the Highlanders. Dunbar was a Lothian man, born in a Saxon county. The antipathy which the Scottish Saxons bore to the Highlanders in former times is almost incredible." (Hales.) Long after Dunbar's time the Highlanders were looked upon with a feeling of mingled dread and contempt by the more settled and prosperous people of the South. See, *e.g.*

the attitude of Baillie Nichol Jarvie towards his Highland kinsman in Scott's *Rob Roy*. — 68. **Makfadyane.** Gregor points out that this refers to an opponent of Wallace described by Blind Harry, the old Scotch poet. He swore allegiance to Edward I, who gave him Argyle and Lorne. Dunbar's assertion that he was fetched from a nook in the north is an allusion to the fact that Makfadyane fled to "a cave within a clyff of stayne under Cragmor," where he was surprised and killed.

Lament for the Makers

This *Lament* — one of the best of Dunbar's moral and reflective poems, and one of his best-known works — was printed at Edinburgh in 1508. It is probable that it was composed shortly before that date (about 1506–1507). Its sombre reflections, its melancholy forebodings of the inevitable approach of death, were, as we gather from the poem itself, suggested by the poet's illness and bodily weakness. But (if the conjectural date of its composition be correct) the poet had other reasons for depression. Some of Dunbar's poems betray an abundant and almost reckless gayety of nature; he was by no means indifferent to wealth and advancement, and in his youth he seems to have been ready to enjoy the comforts and pleasures of this world to the full. But by 1508 Dunbar was young no longer; all his petitions for a benefice had been disregarded, and he had known, like Spenser, what "hell it was in suing long to bide." He was "feeble with infirmity"; old age was approaching (for although he was only about fifty, old age came earlier in those days); he saw death taking his friends and "brethren"; and disappointed, perhaps neglected for younger favorites, he faced his own departure. So life, to Dunbar, took "a sober coloring from an eye, that had kept watch o'er man's mortality." In all likelihood, the circumstances in which the *Lament* was composed were similar to those which prompted Chaucer's *Ballad of Good Counsel* (p. 223); but the spirit of the two poems is characteristically different. Indeed, the spirit of the *Lament* is much closer to certain ballads of the French poet, François

Villon (1431 to about 1484), whose poems were posthumously printed in 1489. It is quite possible, as some have thought, that this resemblance was not merely accidental, and that the Scotch poet was directly influenced by the French. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the theme of such a poem as the *Lament* is so obvious as to be the common property of the poets, and that it was a favorite one with medieval writers, in particular, and especially congenial to the medieval temper. Cf. Villon's *Ballad of Dead Ladies* (translated by Rossetti) and Hale's *Love Letter*, p. 123, *supra*.

264. Makers. *I.e.* poets. Sir Philip Sidney writes: "The Greekes called him a Poet, which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages. It cometh of this word Poiein, which is to make; wherein I know not, whether by luck or wisdome, wee Englishmen have mette with the Greekes, in calling him a *maker*." (*Apology for Poetrie.*) — 4. **Timor Mortis**, etc. Laing thinks that his refrain was borrowed from a poem by Lydgate, beginning, "So as I lay the other night." Gregor suggests that "the poet may have had in mind the words, *Circumdederunt me dolores mortis*, *Ps.* cxv: 3."

265. — 9. **The state of man**, etc. Such, we suspect, was Dunbar; a man "always in extremes," now "dancing merry, now like to dee." Certain critics, such as Matthew Arnold, have contended that this mercurial temperament is characteristic of the Celt as distinguished from the more stolid and steadfast English. Without disputing the truth of this in the abstract, it is worth noting that Dunbar, a West-Lowlander, appears to have been English (or mainly English) by descent. Dunbar, moreover, is fond of having his fling at the Celt. He jeers at Kennedy, a contemporary poet, for his Celtic dress and pronunciation, and in *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* (p. 262) he represents the Devil as deafened with the din raised by the tattered Highlander (the true Celt) who "clatters" in Gaelic.

266. — 50. **The noble Chaucer**, etc. To the student of literary history Dunbar's list of his fellow-poets is one of the most interesting and valuable features of this poem. He

mentions twenty-four poets, the first three English, the rest certainly, or presumably, Scotch. The earliest poets mentioned belong to the fourteenth century; the latest are Dunbar's own contemporaries; so that in time the list covers a period of more than a hundred years. Such a list proves "that there had been a continuous stream of Scottish poetry" from the time of Barbour in the fourteenth century, and extending through Wyntown, Blind Harry, and Henryson "from the middle to the end of the fifteenth century, but bearing with it a fair number of minor poets whose fame now rests on one or two poems almost by chance preserved." (See Mackay's Introduction to Dunbar's *Poems*, *S.T.S.*) In this long roll of honour Chaucer alone remains a vital force and a familiar presence. Three or four others, Barbour, Gower, Lydgate, and Henryson, hold a secure and respectable place in literary history; while a few others, such as Blind Harry and Walter Kennedy, although less well known, are still nominally remembered. At most, some five or six poets out of the twenty-four continue to hold any considerable place in men's memories; the rest are given over to the antiquarian and the theorist. One of these shadowy personages is thought to have been the author of a poem still extant but long neglected; another, Sir Hugh of Eglinton, was "probably" the poet known as Huchown of the Awle Royale, and, if so, he was the author of certain extant poems which were "probably" written by Huchown; unless (as others contend) Huchown was not the Sir Hugh of Eglinton, but Clerk of Tranent. But, while some of these poets, thanks to the antiquarians, are thus more or less securely established on the right side of oblivion, there are others, yet more insubstantial who, in Sir Thomas Browne's phrase, "subsist under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories." Heriot, for instance, is a name and nothing more. If the reader is curious to see what has been discovered or conjectured about these poets, he may consult the notes in Laing's edition of Dunbar's *Poems*, Vol. II, pp. 355 *et seq.;* Dunbar's *Poems*, in *S. T. S.;*

Neilson, *Huchown of the Awle Ryale.* The list is further remarkable for its omissions. It is, perhaps, not surprising that Langland and Hoccleve should have been passed over among the English; but it is singular, as Laing observes, that no mention is made of Thomas the Rhymer and of King James I among the Scotch. Gawain Douglas is also omitted; but he was still living, and, perhaps, not near enough to death to warrant his inclusion.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS

Gawain, or Gavin, Douglas, the third son of the fifth Earl of Angus (known as Archibald, " Bell the Cat "), was born about 1474–1475, perhaps in the Douglas Castle, Lanarkshire, and died in 1522. While he was, therefore, about half a century younger than Henryson, and about fifteen years younger than Dunbar, he only outlived Henryson some sixteen and Dunbar some two years. Douglas, the younger son of an illustrious and powerful house, was given every educational advantage, with the evident purpose of fitting him for an ecclesiastical career. After graduating at St. Andrew's in 1494, he continued his studies at the University of Paris. By 1496 he had been ordained priest, and in 1501 he became Provost of the Collegiate Church of St. Giles, in Edinburgh, now usually known as St. Giles Cathedral. All of his poetry seems to have been composed between the date of his appointment to this important office and the battle of Flodden in 1513. He wrote *The Palace of Honour*, an allegorical poem of over two thousand lines, which he dedicated to King James IV; *King Hart*, an allegorical presentation of man's life and its temptations, the favorite theme of the morality play; a little play called *Conscience;* and a translation of the *Æneid*, generally acknowledged to be his most important work. Whatever may be thought of the poetical quality of this version, Douglas's *Æneid* is noteworthy as the earliest attempt to reproduce a great classical poem in English verse. The prologues, which Douglas prefixed to the various books of his original, contain

some vivid and forcible descriptions of Nature, and are, intrinsically, the most interesting part of the work. The *Æneid* was completed in 1513, shortly before the battle of Flodden. That defeat, a misfortune for Dunbar, had a favorable effect on Douglas's fortunes, and in 1515 he was made Bishop of Dunkeld. But his prosperity was short-lived. He suffered from the political changes and intrigues of the time. In 1521 he took refuge in London, where he died of the plague in the following year, and was buried in the Hospital Church of the Savoy.

The circumstances of his life and his high place involved Douglas in the intrigues and political disturbances of his time, but he was a man of learning and ability. As a poet, his descriptions of Nature are especially admirable.

SIR DAVID LYNDSAY

Sir David Lyndsay, the last of the Scottish Chaucerians, was born in 1490, or some fifteen years after Douglas, and he died in, or about, 1555. But Lyndsay, while he was not untouched by the Chaucerian traditions, was distinctively the spokesman of a new time; a time that looked toward the future rather than toward the past. In Lyndsay's time the gathering discontent with the condition of the Church — so often expressed by his predecessors — took a definite shape in the Reformation. Lyndsay's master-passion was a desire for reform in Church and State; he did not write poetry simply in the spirit of the artist; with him poetry was rather a means to an end; satire and broad humour were his instruments for bringing about certain moral and social reforms. He did not, indeed, formally join the Reformed Church, but he was one of those who urged Knox's call to the ministry, and he was a Protestant and a reformer at heart. In his moral intensity, his unsparing condemnation, his progressive spirit, Lyndsay is nearer to the author of *Piers the Ploughman* than to Chaucer; indeed, he has been called the Langland of Scotland. In Lyndsay's verse, as we might expect, beauty, grace, romance,

and tender sentiment are almost wholly absent, but, — as Sir Walter Scott says, — his was the "satiric rage" —

> "Which bursting on the early stage,
> Branded the vices of the age,
> And broke the keys of Rome."

Lyndsay, like Dunbar, was a courtier. After he left the University of St. Andrew's, he became attached to the household of James IV. He was the companion and playfellow of the young Prince, James V, often carrying him on his back "as ane chapman beris his pack." About 1530 he was knighted, and made Lyon King at Arms, or chief herald of the court. He was sent on various foreign missions, and was a member of Parliament for two years. He was present at the death of his royal patron, James V, in 1442, and in his later years he retired to one of the family estates in Fife, known as the Mount, where he died in 1555.

The general character of Lyndsay's works has been already indicated; they are too numerous to be considered here. Mention may be made, however, of his daring *Satire of the Three Estates* (*i.e.* the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Burgesses), a Morality play produced before the King and Court in 1540–?, a shrewd, coarse, but vigorous attack upon the follies and abuses of the time. *The Dreme*, the earliest and one of the most poetical of his works, is fundamentally a sermon, and a solemn warning to his young king and master, James V. It contains an interesting picture of Scotland, rich in natural resources, but poverty-stricken and turbulent, through vice and misgovernment, and ends with a prayer that the king may have grace to rule righteously. *The Monarchie, or The Dialogue betwixt Experience and ane Courtiour* (1553), Lyndsay's latest poem, is a lengthy survey of the history of the world, with a prophecy of the millennium, when all things shall be made new. If Lyndsay was not a great poet, he was a strong and earnest man: a friend, counsellor, and monitor of the king, his sympathies were with the people, and for centuries the people of Scotland delighted in his works.

Lyndsay's *Poems* have been edited by G. Chalmers, 1806, and D. Laing, 1879. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that Scott introduces Lyndsay into *Marmion*.

The Prologue from the Dream

272. — 88. **Mony rout and roar.** Cf. Douglas' translation of the *Æneid*, I, 3, 52:

> " In the mene quhile, with mony *rout and roir*
> The see thus troublit, — "

Also, in the *Lowlands of Holland*, Child's *Ballads*, II, 214:

> " The stormy winds did *roar* again,
> The raging waves did *rout*."

Rout seems to be used synonymously with *roar*, although the word is probably connected with the dialectal *rut* or *rote*. The latter is found in the United States as well as in England, especially along the coast of Maine, and means the roaring of the surf or breakers on the shore. See *N. E. D.* under the three words.

An Apology for Writing in the Vulgar and Maternal Tongue

This is one of the most interesting and most significant of the many references during the Middle English and early Modern English periods to the low estimate in which the native language was held as a literary or " learned " tongue. Robert of Gloucester (see *supra*, p. 97), writing at the end of the thirteenth century, calls attention to the relative position of French and English in England after the Norman Conquest. French, he says, was the language of " heiemen," or nobles, and English that of " lowe men." The author of the *Cursor Mundi*, writing a little later than Robert of Gloucester, explaining his purpose in using English, says:

> " For unlearned Englishman I spell,
> That understandeth what I tell "

(see *supra*, pp. 143, 144, ll. 89–114). One is not surprised, in view

of the inferior social position of the English people, and in view of the undeveloped state of English literature at the end of the thirteenth century, to find that English was looked down upon by many of the upper classes as a vulgar and uncultivated tongue. But that it should be necessary to apologize for it as late as 1553, one hundred and fifty years after the death of Chaucer, and only four years before the appearance of *Tottel's Miscellany* and the beginning of Elizabethan literature, may seem, perhaps, almost incredible. It must be remembered, however, that after gaining supremacy over French as a cultivated tongue, English had still to achieve, in opposition to Latin, a reputation as a language fit for the use of the "learned." Roger Ascham, in the dedication of his *Toxophilus*, 1545, like Lyndsay, felt constrained to apologize for writing in English. Bacon, the follower of Spenser and Shakespeare, as late as 1623, looked upon English as decidedly inferior to Latin, the "Universal language." It was Bacon's belief that the modern tongues would at one time or another "play the bankrupt with books"; and accordingly, to insure for himself a more lasting and universal fame, the politic philosopher translated a number of his works from their original English into Latin. The *Advancement of Learning* and the *Essays* were thus transformed. Lyndsay's motive, it will be noticed, in writing *The Monarchy* in English, was similar to that which led Wyclif to translate the Bible into the language of the masses, — namely, his desire to inform the common people. But there is, in addition to this, a strong feeling on Lyndsay's part, similar to Chaucer's conviction, that it is more fitting for Englishmen to write in their native tongue than in any other, however learned it may be.

273. — 3. **In vulgar tongue.** Vulgar, not in the secondary sense of *low* or *commonplace*, but in the fundamental meaning of the Latin *vulgaris*, — of or pertaining to the multitude, the masses. **274.** — 32. **Maist ornate tongue mâternal.** *Ornate*, here used in the sense of *proper*, or *fitting;* Lat. *ornatus* from *ornare*, to fit out with necessaries, to equip.

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

275. — 14, 15. **Baith starry heaven and chrystalling . . . The first and highest heaven movábill.** The medieval system of astronomy was based upon the Ptolemaic system, as set forth in the second century of the Christian era by Ptolemy of Alexandria. According to the original Ptolemaic theory, there were seven spheres surrounding and revolving about the earth beyond the ether. To each of these was attached a heavenly body. The first sphere beyond the earth was that of the moon. Then came those of Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. The eighth sphere contained the fixed stars, and was called the Firmament. Later astronomers conceived a ninth sphere, the Crystalline, beyond the eighth; and beyond the ninth a tenth, called the *Primum Mobile*. Lyndsay refers here to the three outermost spheres by the respective phrases " starry heaven," " chrystalling," and " The first and highest heaven movabill." The " highest heaven," or tenth sphere, was not to the medieval mind what " heaven " is to the average person to-day, but an outer or enclosing sphere, defining the World, and separating it from the void beyond. It is this World of the ten concentric spheres that Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II, l. 1051, pictures as " hanging in a golden chain " from the Empyrean, or Heaven, above. Cf. also *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III, ll. 481–483 :

> " They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
> And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
> The trepidation talked, and that first moved."

276. — 28. **As meaneth the apostle John.** Referring in all probability to the vision of the new Jerusalem, *Rev.* xxi, and especially to verses 1–3 : " And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God

is with men, and he will dwell with them . . . " — 35. **The whilk with earès, nor with een.** Cf. *I Cor.* ii : 9.

THE DESIRE FOR REST

277. — 1. **All dead things corporal.** *I.e.* all inanimate material objects, and especially, as the subsequent lines indicate, the " sun, moon, stars," etc. This anticipation of a time when all movement in the physical universe shall cease is a curious phase of the early conception of the millennium. It is based originally, in all likelihood, upon St. Paul's words (*Rom.* viii : 22) : " For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Spenser, in the last stanza of the unfinished *Faerie Queene*, describes a similar state of absolute and universal rest :

" Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things, firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to Mutabilitie;
For all that moveth doth in Change delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:
O! that great Sabaoth God, grant me that Sabaoth's sight!"

— 8. **Great globe of the firmament . . . the seven planets.** See note under *The Restoration of all Things*, **275**, 14. — 15. **Angels of the orders nine.** Referring to the celestial hierarchy. According to Dionysius the Areopagite, who lived about 500 A.D., the nine orders, from highest to lowest, were : seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels.

JAMES WEDDERBURN

James, John, and Robert Wedderburn were sons of James Wedderburn, a merchant of Dundee. They were all born at Dundee, James a few years before and his two brothers a few years after 1500, and all three died about the middle of the sixteenth century. They were therefore about the same age

as John Knox (1505–1572). Living in that contentious period when Rome and Geneva were at strife, the three Wedderburns were active on the side of the Reformed Church. Each of the three brothers was forced to leave Scotland because of his sympathy with the reforming party; James taking refuge in France, John in Germany, and Robert in Paris. All three wrote verse, employing their poetical talents in the cause of the Reformation. James wrote two plays, which were performed in the open air near the west gate of Dundee, and all the brothers wrote religious verses. Some of these were religious paraphrases of popular ballads, or "populaire sanges." Some were hymns translated from the German. These pieces are thought by some to have been first published as broad-sheet-ballads. However this may be, they seem to have appeared in some form about 1442–1445. They were included in a collection of religious poems entitled *Ane Compendious Buik of Godlie Psalmes and Spiritual Songs*, etc., which was published in 1567. This book refers in the title-page to a first edition, but no copies of this earlier edition are known to exist.

This book has more than a merely literary importance; it has a place in the religious and political history of the nation. It stirred and expressed the feelings of the middle class; it took the songs of the people and converted them to the cause of religion (often with extraordinary results); as poetry, it is sometimes ludicrous, sometimes, as in the selections here given, ennobled by a deep and true emotion, but it is said to have done more for the spread of the Reformation doctrine in Scotland than any other single book except the Bible. While the poems of the Wedderburns appear in this collection, scholars have found it impossible to decide upon the authorship of the individual poems. The authorship of the translations here given (although it has been assigned to James Wedderburn) remains uncertain. The song beginning, "The Pope, that Pagan full of pride," effectually introduced by Scott into *The Abbot*, is one of those in the *Compendious Buik*, and the song *The Hunt is up* (p. 303) appears in a religious garb.

ALEXANDER SCOTT

In contrast to the Wedderburns, Alexander Scott stands apart from the poets who found their inspiration in the cause of religious reform. He is the chief, almost the only lyrist among the older poets of Scotland, and he has been called " the Anacreon of old Scottish poetry." Of his life almost nothing is certainly known. He was born about 1525, and is supposed by some to have been a son of Alexander Scott, prebendary of the Chapel Royal at Stirling, but this is only conjecture. From various local allusions in his poetry, and from its general tone, he appears to have lived in Edinburgh, or in its immediate neighborhood. He died about 1584.

The Lament of the Master of Erskine

Lord Hailes suggested (*Ancient Scottish Poems*, p. 314) that the Erskyn who is the supposed speaker of this lament, was " Robert, Master of Erskine, eldest son of John, fourth Lord Erskine, and fifth Earl of Mar." This Master of Erskine was killed at the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh in 1547. He is supposed to have been in love with the Queen Dowager, Mary of Lorraine, the widow of James V, and as she (according to John Knox) made " grit lamentatioun " when she heard of his fate, and " bure his deythe mony dayis in mynd," because she " deirlie belovit him," A. K. Donald suggests that the *Lament* may have been written after the news of Erskine's death reached the capital. (See *Poems of Alexander Scott*, ed. by A. K. Donald, *E. E. T.*, Extra Series, 85.)

IV. BALLADS OF UNCERTAIN DATE

THOMAS THE RHYMER

The famous but vague figure of Thomas of Ercildoune, generally known as Thomas the Rhymer, stands at the beginning of the literary history of Scotland. He is supposed to have been born about 1225 at Ercildoune, now Earlston, a village on the

river Leader, some ten miles to the northeast of the Eildon Hills. He died before the close of the thirteenth century. His reputation as a poet rests upon tradition, since no poems unquestionably his are known to exist. A poem known as *The Romances and Prophecies of Thomas of Ercildoune* (*E. E. T.*, 1875), which relates his adventures with the Queen of the fairies, has indeed been ascribed to him, as well as a romance of *Sir Tristrem* (*S. T. S.*, 1886), but in both cases his authorship is disputed and doubtful.

But if his position in Scottish literature is undefined and speculative, the place of Thomas the Rhymer in folk-lore and local legend is fully assured. "Few personages," says Sir Walter Scott, "are so renowned in tradition, — uniting, or supposed to unite, the powers of poetical composition and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is still regarded with veneration by his countrymen."

The ballad of *Thomas the Rhymer* is given in Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Vol. II, p. 168). Scott's version, he tells us, was obtained, for the most part, "from a lady residing not far from Ercildoune." Dr. Gummere reminds us that the subject of this ballad, "the commerce of mortal with creatures of the other world, is among the oldest themes in story" (*The Popular Ballad*, pp. 215 ff.). Cf. *Sir Opheo*, (p. 103, *supra*), and the ballad of *Tamlane;* and see Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*, I, 215 and 227.

282. — 4. **Eildon tree.** "The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he (Rhymer) delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone" (Scott). — 17. **Harp and carp.** *I.e.* to play on the harp and to sing, or recite. (M.E. *carpen;* to speak, to tell). — 19. **To kiss my lips.** "To kiss a fairy or a spirit puts a mortal in the jurisdiction of the other world" (Gummere).

284. — 66. **She pu'd an apple.** "The traditional commentary upon the ballad informs us, that the apple was the produce of the fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden

was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect." (Scott.)

The Twa Corbies

This is given in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (II, 214). Scott says that it was communicated to him " by C. K. Sharpe, Esq., of Hodden, as written down from tradition, by a lady." It compares favorably, I think, with its " counterpart," *The Three Ravens* (Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, II, 53; Child's *Ballads*, III, 57; Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, II, 270. Am. Ed.), although *The Three Ravens* has its own peculiar merits.

V. POEMS, SONGS, AND CAROLS OF THE EARLY TUDOR PERIOD

The Nut-Brown Maid

This famous poem (usually classed with the ballads) is certainly as early as the fifteenth century, since it was published in 1502, in a book known as Richard Arnold's *Chronicle*. Reprinted in 1707, it attracted the attention of Prior, who made it a basis for his *Henry and Emma*, a characteristically eighteenth-century rendering of this old theme. In 1765 Percy included it in his *Reliques*, and since his time it has appeared in innumerable collections. *The Nut-Brown Maid* has had many admirers. Professor Child, for instance, calls it " this matchless poem." The reader may be left to decide for himself whether this high praise is excessive; in any case, there can be no question of its historical importance, and few will deny that it has both beauty and charm. Some, perhaps, would be inclined to give Scott's *O Brignall banks are wild and fair*, which treats of a similar situation, an even higher place. *The Nut-Brown Maid* — the story of woman's constancy and devotion triumphant over every test — evidently belongs with the *Patient Griselda*. Among the ballads it suggests compari-

son with *Child Waters*. (See Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, 203.)

286. — Nut-brown Maid. "Nut-brown was the old English word for *brunette*, and there was a saying that "a nut-brown girl is neat and blithe by nature" (Morley).

296. — 330. On the splene. *I.e.* on the impulse of the moment. The spleen, as the supposed source of anger and of melancholy, was associated with a sudden impulse, or caprice.

> "Wordes which seid are *on the splene*,
> In fair language peynted ful pleasantlye."
> — *Political Poems*, etc. (ed. Furnival), 62.

A Lyke-wake Dirge

A Lyke-wake (or like-wake) is the watch, or vigil, over a corpse (O.E. *lich*, a dead body, and *wake*, a watch). According to Brand (*Pop. Antiq.*, 465) this *Dirge* was sung at funerals in Yorkshire "down to 1624." Scott, who gives it in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (II, 361), says: "This is a sort of charm, sung by the lower ranks of Roman Catholics, in some parts of the North of England, while watching a dead body previous to interment. The tune is doleful and monotonous, and joined to the mysterious import of the words, has a solemn effect." Scott then quotes the following from a Ms. of the Cotton Library, containing an account of Cleveland, in Yorkshire, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. "When any dieth, certaine women sing a song to the dead bodie, recyting the journey that the partye deceased must goe; and they are of beliefe (such is their fondnesse) that once in their lives, it is good to give a pair of new shoes to a poor man, for as much, as after this life, they are to pass barefoote through a great launde, full of thornes and furzen, except by the meryte of the almes aforesaid they have redemed the forfeyte; for, at the edge of the launde, an oulde man shall meet them with the same shoes that were given by the partie when he was lyving; and, after he hath shodde them, dismisseth them to go through

thick and thin, without scratch or scalle." (*Julius*, F. VI, 459.)

297. — 3. **Fire and Sleet**, etc. "The word *sleet*, in the chorus, seems to be corrupted from *selt* or salt; a quantity of which, in compliance with a popular superstition, is frequently placed on the breast of a corpse" (Scott). (For the use of salt, candles, etc., about the dead, see Brand, *Pop. Antiq.*, 440.) — 7. **Whinny-muir.** "In Yorkshire the vulgar belief (according to Aubrey) was that after a person's death, the soul went over whinney moor" (Brand). The whin is a furze or gorse. There is a species of broom called the *moor-whin;* it grows on bleak heaths, and has sharp spines or needles. *Whinny-moor*, therefore, is comparable to the "great launde, full of thornes and furzen," described in the above quotation from the Cotton Ms. — 19. **Brigg o' Dread.** "The mythologic ideas of the dirge are common to various creeds. The Mahometan believes that in advancing to the final judgment seat, he must traverse a bar of red-hot iron, stretched across a bottomless gulf. The good works of each true believer, assuming a substantial form, will then interpose betwixt his feet and this '*Bridge of Dread*,' but the wicked, having no such protection, must fall headlong into the abyss. — D'Herbelot, *Bibliotheque Orientale*." (Scott.)

The Uses of Adversity

This is taken from a poem of about one hundred lines, in a Ms. of the fifteenth century preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. (Digby Ms. 102.) It is printed under the title *God's Appeal to Man*, together with twenty-three poems from the same Ms. in *E. E. T.*, Orig. Series, 124. The editor thinks that these twenty-four poems date from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and that they are probably the work of a single author.

"Quid Est Homo, Quia Magnificas Eum?"

This is the second stanza of a poem of nearly 700 lines *Pety Job, or Parce mihi Domine!* This poem, which is found in a

Ms. of the fifteenth century (Douce Ms. 322, Bodleian), has been published by the *E. E. T.*, Orig. Series, 124. The full title or descriptive heading, of the poem is as follows: " Here begynneth the nyne lessons of the Dirige whych Job made in hys tribulacion, lying on the Donghyll, and ben declared more opynly to lewde mennes understanding by a solempne, worthy, and discrete clerke, *Rychard Hampole*, and ys cleped pety Job, and ys full profitable to stere synners to compunccion." Dr. J. Kail, the editor, gives no opinion upon the date of the poem, but remarks that it cannot have been composed " by the monk " Richard of Hampole (*i.e.* by Richard Rolle of Hampole) " for it belongs neither to his time nor to his dialect." The text of the stanza here given (*Quid est homo*, etc.) is taken from *Job* vii : 17.

Make We Merry in Hall and Bour

This Carol, and the two immediately following, have been published by the *E. E. T.* in *Songs, Carols, and other Miscellaneous Pieces from the Balliol Ms.*, 354, etc. (Extra Series CI), edited by Dyboski. The Ms. referred to in the title was the *Commonplace-book* (or, as we would say the scrap-book) of a certain Richard Hill. In old times, " when books were dear and scarce " and libraries were few, it was very usual to keep a common-place book of this character, a household repository, in which poems, songs, hymns, and other pieces were written down and preserved for the benefit of the family. Such a book often included prose also; miscellaneous fragments, and notes on various matters of health or household economy, such as, " medical, and other receipts, puzzles, tricks," and " records of important events." Books of this kind were common " from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century," indeed the custom of keeping such a family volume survived " in the remoter parts of the country " until late in the nineteenth century. Hill's book, says the editor, is an interesting example of its class. It is placed in " the earlier part of Henry VIII's reign," or before 1536. This merely means that the poems

themselves are not later than that year. The language of the collection is (to again quote its editor) "a modern transcription," but, as we should expect, the poems which Hill has chosen to preserve are of various dates. The practice of singing *Carols* goes back to very early times. The subject is one of great interest, but too extensive to be entered upon here. Among the numerous collections of old carols, the following may be mentioned. *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols* and *Songs and Carols*, from a Ms. of the fifteenth century, both edited by T. Wright and published by the Percy Society. *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern*, 1833, ed. by W. Sandys. See also the publications of the *E. E. T.* (especially the volume cited above). "The Christmas Carol" in Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* and Chambers' *Book of Days*, II, 754.

THE HUNT IS UP

This spiri ed and famous old song is given in Chappell's *Old Lnglish Popular Music* (I, p. 86). Mr. Chappell took it fr the *Lute Book*, a Ms. music book, of a certain Jane Pickering, 1615. "The tune," Mr. Chappell tells us, "was known as early as 1537." The words have been ascribed with some probability to William Gray, a musician of Henry VIII's reign. We learn from a passage in Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* (1589), that Gray gained the favor of King Henry (the Eighth) "for making certain ballads, whereof one chiefly was *The Hunt is up, The Hunt is up*." This does not prove, as one might at first suppose, that Gray was the author of the song given in the present collection, as there are several other old songs beginning with precisely the same words, any one of which Puttenham might, with equal probability, have had in mind. (See Furness' ed. *Romeo and Juliet*, A. III, sc. v.) This opening, The Hunt is up, appears to have been so common in old songs, that the tune or song played to arouse hunters in the morning was called a *hunts-up*, and the meaning was afterwards extended to include "any song intended to arouse in the morning." See *Hunts-up* in *Cent. Dict.* for various

examples of the use of the term, and the notes in Furness on the passage (" Hunting thee hence with hunts-up to the day ") referred to above. Sir Walter Scott's song, " Waken, lords and ladies gay," is a good modern imitation of the ancient Hunts-up. The hunting-song here given was one of the many secular pieces appropriated for religious uses in the early sixteenth century by the reformers. A religious version of it appears in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (see n. Wedderburn, p. 510), and a similar paraphrase of it is given by Halliwell at the end of the moral play *Wit and Science*. See " Gude and Godlie Ballantrie," *S. T. S.*, p. 174 and note on p. 283.

Death

Ritson (who gives this poem in his *Ancient Songs*) quotes Sir John Hawkins' statement that the poem appears by the Ms. (Rochford) " to have been composed about the time of Henry VIII." Hawkins obtained the manuscript from " a very judicious antiquary," who thought the verses were written " either by or in the person of Anne Boleyn." This, Ritson adds, is " but a conjecture; any other state-prisoner of that period having an equal claim." Ritson, on his own behalf, suggests that George, Viscount Rochford, the brother of Anne Boleyn, who was executed on her account, might have been the author. See Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, 120.

WILLIAM CORNISH

William Cornish (or Cornysshe) was a Court musician in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. An official entry shows that he was connected with the Court as early as 1493. In 1509, he was made master of the children of the Chapel Royal, and in this capacity, chose and supervised the choristers in the Chapel choir. He was also concerned in the preparation and presentation of various pageants, and in 1520 he accompanied Henry VIII to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, " where he was intrusted with the devising of the pageants at the banquet." Four of his songs were printed by Wynkyn de Worde (1536)

but not much of his music has been preserved. He died not later than 1524. The poem here given was one of those published by Wynkyn de Worde: it has been reprinted in Chambers and Sidgwick's *Early English Lyrics*, and elsewhere.

JOHN SKELTON

Skelton was an important figure in the scholarly and literary world of Henry VII's reign, and of the early part of Henry VIII's. He was born in Norfolk, probably at Diss, about 1460. He studied at Cambridge and Oxford, and received from each, in comparatively early years, the degree of "poet laureate." That he was considered a distinguished scholar by the men of his time is attested by the comments of Caxton and Erasmus. The latter calls him the "light and ornament of English letters." Skelton was familiar, it seems, with most of the Latin and Greek authors, with the French literature of the time, and especially with the writings of the English poets of the fourteenth century. Further, he was chosen tutor for the young prince Henry, afterward Henry VIII, a fact which in itself bespeaks his reputation as a scholar. In 1498 he took orders, and from 1507 until his death in 1529 was rector of his native town of Diss.

By reason of the unevenness of his work and the short doggerel-like metre in which he cast his most important poems, Skelton has been somewhat underestimated. Historically he holds a distinguished place in the development of early Tudor literature. He is, moreover, one of the most versatile and original of English poets. Besides a morality play called *Magnyfycence*, and several interludes and comedies which have been lost, Skelton wrote a number of musical love poems, and several vigorous satires against the corruptions of Church and State. Among his earlier works are *Philip Sparrow* (*cir.* 1508) and the *Bowge of Court*, the rewards of Court (*cir.* 1509). The former is an elegy written in the characteristic Skeltonic verse and addressed to Jane Scroupe, one of the pupils of the Black Nuns at

Carow, on the death of her pet sparrow. Skelton probably took his subject from the example of Catullus, who in *Carmen, 3*, beginning " Lugete, o Veneres Cupidinesque," bemoans the death of Lesbia's sparrow. The *Bowge of Court* is a lengthy allegorical poem satirizing the uncertainties and vanities of court life. But Skelton's strongest and most daring satire belongs to his later period in the troubled times of Henry VIII. In *Colin Clout* (*cir.* 1519) Skelton voices the popular discontent with the state of England, and blames the clergy for the wrongs the people are forced to endure. In it appears his first criticism of the all-powerful Wolsey, which becomes even stronger and more open in his *Speke Parrot* (*cir.* 1521) and *Why Come Ye Not to Court* (*cir.* 1522). In the latter, Skelton openly attacks Wolsey as the great festering sore upon England, as a dangerous favorite threatening the supremacy of the king, and as the cause of the people's many wrongs.

Of the selections included here, the first two are good examples of Skeltonic verse, the " ragged rime " as he calls it, which in Skelton's hands has an original power and rough vigour admirably sustaining the reader's interest. The playful mock-seriousness of *Philip Sparrow*, the homely directness of *Colin Clout*, and the grace and melody of the lyric to *Mistress Margaret Hussey* (from the *Garland of Laurel*, *cir.* 1520) show Skelton's versatility in using two and three stress rimed lines.

A Dirge for Philip Sparrow

A *dirge* (M. E. *dirige*) is primarily a name given to the Church service, or requiem, for the repose of the dead. *Dirige* (or dirge) was the first word in an antiphon chanted in that service: " *Dirige, Domine, Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam.*" (Direct, O Lord, my God, my way in thy sight.) *Psalm* v, 9, and so the initial word *dirige* was sometimes applied to the whole service, and the priests conducting a mass for the departed were said to " sing a dirge." This poem on the death of Jane Scroupe's pet sparrow is not merely a dirge in our com-

mon sense, not merely, that is, a lament, or elegy, like Collins' *Dirge in Cymbeline;* it expresses, indeed, the personal grief of the schoolgirl at Carow over the loss of her favorite, but it also brings before us the singing of a *dirge* in the ecclesiastical sense, " for that sweet soul's sake." So, the solemn words of the Church's office for the departed are heard at intervals throughout the poem, and the echoes of distant chants mingle with little Jane Scroupe's childish distress. Skelton's contemporary, Alexander Barclay, who objected to these references to a solemn service in a poem of light and trivial character, refers contemptuously to the *Dirge for Philip Sparrow* in his *Ship of Fools*. The passages from the Latin ritual interspersed throughout the poem correspond in general to the order of the Vespers of the Office for the dead. Thus, *Placebo* (literally I will please) is the initial word of the opening antiphon: *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum* (I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living) *Vulgate, Ps.* cxiv : 9, or *Ps.* cxvi : 9, in the English *Bible.* The *placebo* and the *dirge* are often spoken of together, and the words are used in a similar way. Thus Langland is said to have sung *diriges* and *placebos* for his living.

Dilexi (literally, I am delighted), l. 3, is the first word of the Psalm which follows the *placebo* (Ps. cxiv, *Vulgate*) *Dilexi, quoniam exaudiet Dominus vocem orationis meae* (I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer); and *Ad dominum* (l. 66) is the opening of the second antiphon *Ad Dominum, cum tribularer clamavi* (When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord) *Ps.* cxix. *Vulgate.*

Dyce remarks, that " Skelton is not the only writer that has taken liberties with the Romish service-book." After referring to Chaucer's *Court of Love*, and other pieces, he cites the following, " from rare tract entitled *A Commemoration or Dirige of Boner*, etc., 1569:

> " ' Placebo, Bo, Bo, Bo, Bo, Bo,
> *De profundis clamavi*, how is this matter come to pass,
> *Laevavi oculos meos*, from a darke depe place.' "
>
> — Skelton's *Poetical Works*, II, p. 121 (Dyce's ed.).

307. — 8. **Carow.** A nunnery near Norwich, dedicated to St. Mary and St. John. It consisted of a prioress and nine Benedictine nuns, "the nunnes blake" of the poem. (Dyce.) — 12. **Set in our bead roules.** *I.e.* set in the rolls, or lists, of persons (here sparrows) to be prayed for. A *bead* means primarily a prayer (M. E. *bede* = a prayer, Old English *biddan* = to ask, to pray), hence a *bead-roll* was the name given to "the list of the persons and objects for which prayers were said, read out by the preacher before the sermon." The meaning now commonly attached to the word *bead*, grew out of the practice of using the balls strung on a chaplet or rosary to keep count of the number of prayers repeated. *Bead* was thus, first, the *prayer*, and second, the *object* used in praying, by means of which the prayers were counted. See *Cent. Dict.* and *N. E. D.* and Cf. note **194**, 159.

Colin Clout

Stopford Brooke in his *English Literature* takes *Colin* to mean a countryman or shepherd, and *Clout* a mechanic. But the combination would be virtually meaningless. *Clout* may mean "ragged" or "patched" (from Old English *clut*), which would make *Colin Clout* mean "the ragged rustic, shepherd, or farmer." Spenser, in the *Epistle* prefaced to his *Eclogues*, says that he calls his shepherd Colin Clout because of his simple and unaffected manner of speech, and because of the "baseness of the name." The point is that Skelton uses a name suggestive of a man of the lower classes. Cf. *Piers the Ploughman*, and the French *Jacques Bonhomme*.

To Mistress Margaret Hussey

311. — 22. **Isaphil.** Hypsiphyle. See note **189**, 245. — 23. **Coliander.** Coriander, a plant of the Parsley family. — 24. **Sweet Pomander.** A mixture of perfumes placed in a ball, or round perforated box, and carried in the pocket, or on a chain around the neck. — 25. **Cassander.** The plant Cassandra of the Heath family.

PART FOURTH

WYATT AND SURREY TO SPENSER

WYATT AND SURREY

THE importance of the work of Wyatt and Surrey and the significance of their place in English literature are so well understood that little need here be said upon either subject. In the period of the early Renaissance, the period of preparation and of promise preceding the age of Shakespeare, they are literary pioneers introducing a new art, drawing upon new sources of inspiration, and in certain respects achieving higher standards in their work than English poetry had known before. The publication of the miscellany in which their poems first appeared is generally looked upon as marking definitely the beginning of Elizabethan literature. It must be remembered, however, that though *Tottel's Miscellany* was not printed until 1557, the lyrics of Wyatt and Surrey were written during the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547). Sir Thomas Wyatt was born in 1503, and died in 1542. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, born probably in 1517, was beheaded, on a charge of treason, by Henry VIII in the last year of his reign. The lives of these "Courtly Makers" were thus practically coextensive with that monarch's sovereignty; and their interests and activities are to be identified with Henry VIII rather than with Elizabeth; with the beginnings of Renaissance literature in England rather than with its culmination.

Both poets were noblemen of high rank, taking an active and important part in the affairs of the realm. With them culture was necessarily but one among many interests, and they wrote poetry as accomplished amateurs, rather than as professional men

of letters. Wyatt was educated at Cambridge and studied probably also at Oxford. Surrey was proficient in all the feats and graces of chivalry, and enjoyed the privilege of studying abroad. Indeed, both men were in touch with the most advanced learning of the Continent. Wyatt was employed by the king on several diplomatic missions, to France, Spain, Italy, and Flanders. From Italy he drew, if not the inspiration, at least the form and many of the ideas, of his poems. His chief contribution to the new English poetry was perhaps the writing of sonnets, in which he followed Petrarch, although modifying somewhat the strict Petrarchian form. Surrey's notable achievement was the writing of successful blank-verse in his translation of the *Æneid*. To Surrey the honor thus belongs of introducing into English poetry the metre of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Wordsworth's *Excursion*. Both Wyatt and Surrey, moreover, did much to develop in English poetry a smoother versification, a more harmonious, orderly, and condensed style, and to introduce that subjective interest which becomes one of the most striking features of modern poetry.

The selections here printed from the works of the two poets suggest their respective merits. The first is a typical example of the sonnet form as practised by Wyatt. The poem *Of the Courtier's Life*, is a satire on the vexations and uncertainties of court life, which though modelled upon the classical satirists, by its genuine note of personal feeling brings us close to the manly character of its author. Surrey's poems are more polished than Wyatt's, but they are also more conventional in sentiment, and lack the vigor and directness of those written by the elder and less finished poet.

And wilt thou leave me Thus?

315. — 4. **Grief and grame.** Grief, misery. Old English *grama*, anger.

Of the Courtier's Life

316. — 1. **John Poins**, who died in 1558, was one of Wyatt's most intimate friends.

317. — 27. **Sely lambs**. Happy, lucky, fortunate, innocent. See "silly," *Cent. Dict.*

318. — 60. **But I am here in Kent and Christendom**. *I.e.* In his house at Allington, Kent, where he was born, and to which he retired about 1541, after the downfall of the minister, Cromwell, Wyatt's supporter.

The Frailty of Beauty

This poem is ascribed in the Harrington Ms. to Lord Vaux.

319. — 8. **Geason**. "Once gotten, not *geason*," *i.e.* once obtained, it is nothing extraordinary, or not worth struggling for. *Geason* = extraordinary, amazing. See *Cent. Dict.*

How no Age is content with his own Estate

321. — 16. **Dented chews**. *I.e.* my jaws furrowed, or worn, by the emaciation of extreme age. *Chews*, *chewes*, or *chaws*, are forms of *jaw*. Cf. "I wyll put an hooke in thy chawes." *Ezek.* xxix. 4, trans. 1551. See *N. E. D.* and "jaw" in Skeat's *Etymol. Dict.*

THOMAS, LORD VAUX

Thomas, second Baron Vaux of Harrowden, eldest son of Sir Nicholas, the first Baron Vaux, was born in 1510, and succeeded to the barony on the death of his father in 1523. He was made a Knight of the Bath, and for a time was Captain of the Isle of Jersey, but on the whole was less prominent than his father in public and military affairs. He belongs to the little group at the Courts of Henry VIII, and Edward VI, who introduced an Italian flavor into English poetry and prepared the way for the triumphs of the Elizabethan lyric. How much Vaux may have written is uncertain, his slender reputation rests on the few lyrics known to be his which time has spared. Two of his poems were included in the collection known as *Tottel's*

Miscellany (1537), and thirteen poems appear under his name in another anthology, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1578). Lord Vaux died in 1556. Puttenham described him as "a noble gentleman who much delighted in vulgar making" (*i.e.* English poetry), but "otherwise a man of no great learning." Shakespeare put part of Vaux's poem *The Aged Lover Renounceth Love*, which was very popular towards the end of the sixteenth century, into the mouth of the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet* (Act, V, sc. i). See *D. N. B.*

THOMAS TUSSER

Thomas Tusser was born about 1524 at Rivenhall, near Witham in Essex. He was chorister at the collegiate chapel of the castle of Wallingford (or Wallingford College), Berkshire, where he is said to have been "ill-treated, ill-clothed, and ill-fed." He later became a chorister in St. Paul's Cathedral, and from there went to Eton where he studied under Nicholas Udall. After leaving Eton, he entered Cambridge, but being compelled by sickness to leave the University, he attached himself to the court, in the service of Lord Paget, as a musician. After ten years of this service, he married and settled down as a farmer near Brantham in Suffolk. Here he wrote his *Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1557). Tusser's life was an unsettled one. He left Brantham and tried one place after another, until driven out from London by the plague (1573–1574), he returned to Cambridge. He left Cambridge, however, for London, where he died in 1580, and was buried in the Church of St. Mildred in The Poultry.

Fuller speaks of Tusser as "this stone of Sisyphus" who "could gather no moss," and says that "none was better at the theory or worse at the practice of husbandry."

RICHARD EDWARDS

Richard Edwards was born in Somersetshire about 1523. He was educated at Oxford, and on leaving the University he was entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn. He wrote several

plays (at one of which Queen Elizabeth "laughed heartily — and gave the author great thanks for his pains"), but only one of his dramas, a comedy on *Damon and Pitheas*, is extant. Many of his poems were published in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1578. On the whole Edwards seems to have been a successful and useful man. He had some substantial tokens of Court favor, and his verses were praised by his contemporaries. He died in 1566.

GEORGE TURBERVILLE

George Turberville, who belonged to "a right ancient and gentile family" of Dorsetshire, was born about 1540 and died about 1610. Turberville appears to have been a man of learning, something of a traveller, and a personage of no little importance in the literary life of the early Elizabethan period. He published a book on Russia, on his return from an embassy to Ivan the Terrible; a book of *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonnets;* a work on Falconry; a translation of certain poems of Ovid, and sundry other works. He was apparently an intimate friend of Gascoigne, and like him he was looked back to as "the worthy poet of a rude period," by his poetical contemporaries.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE

While he failed to reach the highest altitude of poetry, which his contemporary Sackville entered in his contribution to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, Gascoigne was a man of versatile talents and restless energy, whose strong personality helped to shape the literature of his own and succeeding generations. When we read the story of his stormy and wayward life, and see how a passion of repentance follows the passion of youthful and adventurous spirit, we feel that there was something very human and vital in this man, which wins both our sympathy and our interest. Gascoigne was not of the class that Byron despised — "an author that is all author;" his favorite motto was *Tam Marti quam Mercurio* (as much Mars as Mercury)

and he was a soldier as well as a poet and a scholar. He lived in an age when men had left the old ways in literature, and when they were eagerly looking for new paths. In this age of experiment and uncertainty, Gascoigne was a daring pioneer, so that an author of the following generation could write: "Master Gascoigne is not to be abridged of his deserved esteem, who first beat the path to that perfection which our best poets, aspired to since his departure."

George Gascoigne was born about 1530–1536. The eldest son of Sir John Gascoigne, of Cardington, Bedfordshire, the poet was a man of good birth and excellent social position. He studied at Cambridge, and afterward at Gray's Inn, but his temperament was lawless and his habits extravagant, and his time was by no means wholly given to books. He went to Holland to take part in the struggle against Spain, and served under William of Orange with bravery and some distinction. After his return to England, 1574, he had an important share in devising those famous revels at Kennilworth with which Leicester welcomed Queen Elizabeth in 1575. Gascoigne had written both poetry and plays before this, but after his return from Holland he published a collection of his poems "corrected, perfected, and augmented by the author," under the title, *The Posies of George Gascoigne, Esquire.* This was followed by *The Steele Glas* and *The Complaynte of Phylomene*, which were published together in 1576. Gascoigne's reputation was growing, and he had good prospects of Court favor, but his health was already failing, and he died in 1577.

As a poet Gascoigne was soon eclipsed by the great writers who immediately followed him. He seems to have been held in slight esteem by his successors, and in recent times he has been severely judged. It is easy to find better men and better poets than Gascoigne, yet he is not "to be abridged of his deserved esteem." As a man he seems to have had a vein of true humility with all his dash and daring, and as a poet his works, if they lack grace and beauty, have some solid and enduring merits.

The Steel Glass

332. — 1. **And thus I sing.** *The Steel Glass* contains over eleven hundred lines, so that the portion here given is only about one-third of the entire poem. The selection, which begins at l. 149, includes the most striking and representative parts of the poem, and a brief account of the introductory lines, which are here omitted, will make the general plan more clear. The poet begins with an invocation to the nightingale, or Philomene, who, like a true satirist, sings, in spite of danger or despite, and begs her help in telling a tale which may content the learned. We are then told, in an allegorical passage, that the speaker is *Satira*, or *Satire*, the daughter of *Plain-Dealing* and *Simplicity*, and the twin sister of *Poesis*, or *Poetry*. *Satira* is injured by *Vain-Delight* (a friend of *Flattery* and *Deceit*) who cuts her tongue that she may not betray his evil deeds. Yet, — as the gods allowed the nightingale to sing "a pleasant note sometimes," "though that her tongue were cut," — so *Satira*

> "may sometimes Reprover's deeds reprove,
> And sing a verse to make them see themselves."

"Thus," Satira continues (in this manner, and with this object) "*thus I sing.*" — 10. **My lord**, *i.e.* Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, to whom *The Steel Glass* was dedicated. In 1580, he was appointed Lord-Deputy to Ireland, and after having been the friend and patron of Gascoigne, Grey took another poet — the young Edmund Spenser — into his service as his secretary. — 12. **A plain song**. The *plain song* was a simple, austere style of vocal music, used in the Christian Church from very early times. It bore some resemblance to a *recitative* in a modern oratorio, or to a simple chant sung in unison. Hence, a *plain song* came to mean a simple air, free from elaboration or ornament, which might be made the basis for variations. (See "Plain-song," Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon*.) To *warble*, on the other hand, meant to sing with trills, or melodious turns.

333. — 18. **Surcuydry**. (M.E. *Surquiderie* from O.F. *surquiderie* = presumption). Pride, arrogance, presumption.

> " How often falleth al th' effect contraire
> Of *surquidrye* and foul presumpcioun."
> — Chaucer, *Troilus*, I, 212.

— 29. **To see himself**. Every one wishes to have a glass that will flatter. In such a glass he sees himself, — and yet he does not see himself as he really is. The gift of seeing " oursel's as others see us " is not what we want. — 30. **A glass of common glass**, *i.e.* a glass, " colored to destroy its transparency and give it a reflective power." Gascoigne's satire is based, as its title suggests, on the contrast between the old-fashioned " glasses," or " mirrors " (whether these were made of *common glass*, of the *beryl*, with its foil, or backing, " of lovely brown," or simply of polished steel) and the new-fashioned glasses, backed, as our modern mirrors are, with a preparation containing quicksilver. The Venetians had reached a high degree of excellence in the manufacture of their new-fashioned mirrors, so that the Venetian glasses were famous throughout Europe, and greatly in demand. In 1564 the mirror-makers of Venice had formed themselves into a corporation; and in Elizabeth's reign the Venetian mirrors were a novelty to the English, and highly prized. Gascoigne, however, disdains these new-fangled importations, and contrasts the new mirror (the *crystal* glass, l. 40), " which shows the thing much better than it is," with the oldtime glass of burnished steel, which " trusty was and true," and which showed things as they really were. This faithful, oldtime *Steel-glass* — this glass of truth — is the mirror in which Gascoigne seeks to reflect his time. " The poet," says Dr. Schelling, " holds up his mirror of burnished steel before the Commonwealth, reflecting therein Kings, gentlemen, soldiers, and peasants, widening these various classes to include all sorts and conditions of men, from the weakling prince and the corrupt judge to the dishonest tradesman and degraded villein of the soil."

(*The Life and Writings of George Gascoigne*, p. 74. Pub. U. of Pa.)

334. — 53. **Lammas day.** *I.e.* August 18, the festival of the wheat harvest in England, when loaves of bread were offered in the churches, as the first-fruits of the harvest. Hence the name *lammas*, which means a *loaf-mass*, or bread-feast (Old English *hlafmæsse; hlaf* = loaf, *mæsse* = mass). See "Gule of August" in Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, p. 189; and Chambers' *Book of Days*, II, 154. — 55. **Tyburn Cross.** "In allusion to the dying speeches often made at the gallows" (Morley). Tyburn, formerly a village in the vicinity of London, is said to have been used as a place for the execution of criminals as early as the twelfth century. — 71. **A Glassmaker indeed.** Gascoigne goes on to explain, in a passage omitted here, that the "glassmaker" referred to was *Lucilius*, *i.e.* the Latin poet *Caius Lucilius* (about 180 B.C.–103 B.C.), who held up his satiric mirror to the life of his age.

335. — 89. **Who taught King Crœsus**, etc. The familiar story of the interview between King Crœsus, King of Lydia, and Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, is told in Herodotus, Bk. I Chaps. XXX–XXXII. Solon, it will be remembered, finally told the King to call no man truly happy until death had ended a prosperous life. — 91. **Lycurgus.** "The famous laws of Lycurgus were designed, says Plutarch, to secure within Sparta the conquest of luxury and to exterminate the love of riches" (Morley).

338. — 211. **To bid my beads.** In general, to say my prayers. Who, the poet asks, shall I pray for first? Who shall stand first in my bead-roll? Cf. n. **307**, 12. — 215. **Good Peerce.** An obvious reference to the peasant hero of Langland's vision. It is interesting to note that these poet-reformers, Langland, Skelton, and Gascoigne, all turn to the common people, the labourers, when they wish to find a spokesman fit to lead, or to bear witness against the evils of the time. (Cf. *Colin Clout*, p. 309, *supra*, and note). Dr. Schelling says: "Apart from the pervading fervor and eloquence of his general

invective and the candor with which he displays the canker of false-seeming that taints all grades of society, nothing could be finer than the courage and sincerity with which the courtly poet stretches forth the hand of fellowship to the plowman."

339. — 233. **By earing up the baulks.** *I.e.* by ploughing up the uncultivated strip of land which marked the boundary between two estates. For this and other meanings of "baulk," see *Cent. Dict.*

340. — 275. **Firmenty.** "From Latin *frumentum*, corn. As a food this is whole wheat, free from husk, boiled in milk, sweetened and flavoured. Here it means grain merely boiled or steeped, and not made into good malt by giving time and care to produce good germination, and the consequent development of its sugar" (Morley). — 278. **Golden thumb** An allusion to the proverb, "An honest miller has a thumb of gold." (Cf. n. **206,** 563.) Conflicting explanations have been given of this saying; but, as we particularly gather from various other sources that millers had but an indifferent reputation for honesty, it clearly implies that in taking his toll out of the meal he ground, the average miller managed to get more than his due. — 279. **Barm bear price of wheat.** *Barm*, the scum or froth which rises to the surface of beer or other malt liquors when fermenting, was used as leaven, or yeast, in bread-making. The sense here appears to be: when bakers no longer make up for the poor quality, or small quantity, of their flour by the lavish use of barm. In any case, the line refers to some fraudulent device on the part of the bakers, just as the two lines immediately following relate to frauds practised by brewers and butchers. — 281. **When butchers blow not**, etc. Butchers used various devices to make stale meat appear fresh, blowing it up, stretching it, or washing it with fresh blood. "I pray you, good man Kil-Calfe, what havocke play you with puffing up of meate, and blowing with your pricker as you flea it: — Oh Butcher, a long lent be your punishment, for you make no conscience in deceiving the poor." (Greene, *A Quippe for an Upstart Courtier*, Grosart's ed., XI,

273. *Stubbes, Anatomy of Abuses*, p. 26 in *New Shaks. Soc. Pub.* See also *N.E.D.*, "blow," 22, and Thornbury's *Shakespeare's England*, I, 60.) — 285. **Make more bones.** *I.e.* make more scruples about swearing and lying. Cf. the expressions "without more bones," = without more scruples; "to make more bones" = to raise more objections.

341. — 292. **By giving day.** "Drapers were said to take advantage of failure of light, and to keep their shops purposely dark, that they might more readily deceive customers in selling their fabrics. This was the charge made against them in Gower's *Vox Clamantis*, etc. (Bk. V, ll. 779–780)" (Morley). See also Thornbury's *Shakespeare's England*, I, 56. — 293. **Parchmentiers**, etc. *I.e.* when makers of trimmings (Fr. *passementier* = lace-maker, *passementerie* = lace-work) use no silk of an inferior quality. *Ferret-silk* is floss silk, *i.e.* the rough silk broken off in the winding, and used chiefly in the manufacture of common silk fabrics. Cf. Florio (1598): "Fioretti — a kind of coarse silk called foret or ferret silke." (See *N.E.D*, "ferret.") — 297. **When takers**, etc. This may mean, "when *purveyors* (*i.e.* those who took or exacted supplies or necessaries for the sovereign), shall neither take bribes nor assume an arrogant or boastful manner." As, however, the word *taker* had various meanings in Gascoigne's time, and as the phrase *use no brags* admits of more than one interpretation, the line is ambiguous. — 299. — **When searchers**, etc. According to Nares, a *Searcher* is a technical name for a collector of customs, or a revenue officer. The sense here appears to be: when customs-officers accept no bribes to pass over dutiable articles in a ship, and take nothing improperly in connection with anything they see. Nares cites the following: "Searchers, an old term for a farmer of the Customs. *Fermier de ferme publique.* A searcher, or customer; the King's or Queen's farmer of Commonwealth's revenues. (*Nomenclature*, 1585)." — 312. **Precious coles**, as here used, is a rare word of obscure origin. *Cole* means treachery, deceit, falsehood. The sense is: when roisterers do not

assume a bearing above their condition, and no longer give a colour or appearance of truth to their deception by swearing outrageous falsehoods. *Precious* is here used in an ironical sense, as one would say, "He is a *precious* rogue." A *cole-prophet* is a false prophet; one who pretends to tell the future by magic, or trickery. — 313. **Fencers' fees**, etc. *I.e.* when fencers' charges (which were then often thought extortionate) are no larger than the rewards we give our monkeys, viz. a crust of bread, and a cuff, or blow. In Silver's *The Paradox of Defence* (1599), we read of an Italian fencing-master, named Rocco, who had a splendid fencing-school in London, most luxuriously fitted up, which he called his "colledge." Here he "taughte none commonly under twentie, fortie, fifty or an hundred pounds." From Gosson's *School of Abuse*, and elsewhere, we learn that the fencing-schools had a bad reputation. A *bob* may mean, a light blow, cuff, or rap, or else a scoff or taunt. (See *N.E.D.*, "bob," sb. 3.)

THOMAS SACKVILLE

Thomas Sackville, the greatest poet of the early half of Elizabeth's reign, was born in Buckhurst, Surrey, in 1536. His father, Sir Richard Sackville, while he devoted himself with success to public affairs, had a respect for scholarship, and regretted that as a boy he had been driven from all love of learning by the fear of a beating. But learning, the loss of which the father regretted, was gained in good measure by the son. Thomas Sackville is said to have studied both at Oxford and Cambridge, and although it is asserted that the records fail to confirm this, it is evident that in some way he was carefully educated. Bacon addresses him in later life as "one that was excellently bred in all learning," and adds that this learning "shone out" in all his "speech and behaviour." After completing his general training (at Cambridge, or elsewhere) Sackville entered upon the study of the law at the Inner Temple. Here, with Norton, a fellow-student, he wrote *Gorboduc*, the first regular English tragedy, which was pro-

...ced at a Christmas entertainment at the Temple in 1561. This work marks an important advance in the progress of the English drama, but Sackville's reputation as a poet rests chiefly upon his contributions to a huge poetical enterprise by various authors, known as *The Mirror for Magistrates*. This work, modelled on Lydgate's *Fall of the Princes*, was designed to be a *mirror* in which *magistrates* (*i.e.* those great, or in authority) could see by the example of others how the wickedness and ambition of those in high places had been punished in the past. This undertaking did not originate with Sackville (*Camb. Eng. Lit.*, Chap. IX), but his two contributions to it — *The Induction* and *The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham* — are poetically, the really memorable part of the work. These contributions first appeared in an edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which was published in 1563. Sackville might have done even greater things in literature; but at the outset of his career, while he was yet under thirty, he forsook poetry for politics. His diplomatic career belongs to history. He was knighted and made Lord Buckhurst in 1567; he was employed on various embassies and State trials. He was created Earl of Dorset by James I, and he became Chancellor of the University of Oxford (1591) and Lord High Treasurer of England (1599). He died in 1608, while sitting at the Council table.

As a poet, Sackville was alike the successor of Lydgate and his masters, and the predecessor of the author of the *Faerie Queene*. Spenser himself paid a graceful tribute to his forerunner; and in later days Sir Egerton Bridges, writing of Sackville as a poet, observed quaintly: "It is grievous to think that this splendid genius, who lived to a great age and was created Earl of Dorset by James I, afterwards sunk the poet in the coarse character of the statesman."

The Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates

343. — 29. **Scorpio** is the eighth and **Sagittarius** the ninth sign of the Zodiac. Scorpio is here represented as flying before

the dart of the Archer, Sagittarius, *i.e.* the sun is entering the sign of Sagittarius, or in other words, it is about the middle of November. The elaborate astronomical details with which the poem opens (first seven stanzas) are intended to heighten the reader's feeling that " most fel winter " is at hand. *Phaeton*, or the Sun, is now nearing the end of his annual race; the days are growing shorter, and *Cynthea*, the Moon, is beginning to supply the Sun's place with her reflected light, and the winter constellations have already taken their places in the heavens. It is not unlikely that in old days, when the belief in Astrology was widespread, there may have been a greater general interest in the position of the heavenly bodies than there is to-day; for astrology, unlike astronomy, joined the stars to human destiny, and gave men a personal interest in the heavens. However this may be, there are many astronomical references in the works of the older writers, which a modern poet would hesitate to introduce, and which a modern reader is likely to find obscure. Cf. the allusions to *Capricorn* and *Aquarius* (tenth and eleventh signs of the Zodiac) in Lyndsay's *Dream* (p. 270), and the passage in *Prologue to Canterbury Tales* (Hath in the Ram), 190, 8, and note.

344. — 55. **To die the death**, *i.e.* to die in a predestined, or inevitable manner. Cf. *Gen.* II. 17, " for even ye same day thou eatest of it thou shalt dye ye dethe.' (1551), and Shakespeare, *M. N. D.*, I, 1.

> " Either to *die the death*, or to abjure
> Forever the society of men."

344. — 62. **Reducèd**, *i.e.* brought back (Lat. *re-ducere*). Cf. Shakespeare, *Rich. III*, V. v, 36:

> " Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
> That would *reduce* these bloody days again."

345. — 80. **Wealkèd**. Withered, shrivelled (M.E. *welken*, fade, vanish, wither). Cf. Chaucer, *Pardoner's Tale, supra*, l. 88, " Full pale and *welked* is my face." Or possibly it is the early modern English form of *whelked* (*i.e.* ridged, or furrowed, like

the shell of a *whelk*), and in this case, *wealked* means lined, with the traces of her tears. — 82. **Reposèd**, *i.e.* all her rest (as *seemed*, or suited, her state the best) was rested, or stayed (*reposed*), in woe and plaint. That is to say, she only found rest in unrest.

346. — 123. **All to-dashed.** The *to* here is an intensive prefix of Old English origin (see *Cent. Dict.* "to" 2), and must not be confused with the sign of the infinitive. It occurs in such verbs as *tobeat*, *toburst*, *tofall*, etc. The word *all* (utterly, wholly) was used to give an added intensity, as in the expressions *all to split*, *all to broken* (see *Cent. Dict.*, "all," adv.). *To-dashed*, here, may mean either that she utterly shattered, or frantically beat herself, for woe. Cf. "For er he departed his shielde was *all to daisht* that the thridde part he left not hool," etc. ("Merlin," *E. E. T.*, III, 443); and "And a certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon Abimelech's head, and *all to-break* his skull." (*Judges*, ix: 53; Milton's *Comus*, l. 380; and Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, §§ 28 and 436). — 135 **Drere** (drear) grief, gloom. Cf. Spenser: —

"The hoarse night-raven, trump of dolefull drere."

— 139. **Forsunk** means *entirely*, *utterly*, *wholly sunk*. The prefix is here used intensively, as in forlorn, forspent.

347. — 141. **Of a stike.** I have not been able to find another passage in which the word *stike* is used, and its derivation and meaning are uncertain. Nares, in his *Glossary*, connects it with the Greek *stikos*, a row, and hence a line, or verse, *i.e.* words set in a row, — and supposes *stike* in this passage to mean a stanza. According to this view, the line would mean: "I had no sooner spoken for (of) a stanza." This explanation has been adopted by several editors, but it is unconvincing and an offence to poetry. The following explanation, the first of the two suggested by Professor Morley, is far more probable. Morley suggests that *stike* may mean "a sigh or stifled groan." He says: "The last line had been, 'That at thy sight I can but sigh and weep.' *Steigh* is still used in Scotland, as defined by Jamison, as 'a stifled groan

as from one in distress or bearing a heavy load,' *stech* and *stegh* meaning to puff and groan." (*Shorter English Poems*, p. 172.)

348. — 185. **A desert wood.** Sackville's account of his visit to the shades is not wanting in originality, although he did not hesitate to use the work of his great predecessors Vergil and Dante. Vergil is led by the Sibyl, Dante by Vergil, and Sackville by Sorrow. In the Latin, Italian, and English poets, the *desert wood* forms part of the conception. Vergil imagined a huge forest covering the middle regions between our upper world and the Shades (*Æn.*, VI, 131), and he pictured the chasm which led to the lower world as surrounded by a dark thicket (*Æn.*, VI, 237); while Dante at the beginning of his poem loses himself in a dark wood (*una selva oscura*) of error, like the Red Cross Knight in the first Canto of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. — 204. **An hideous hole**, etc. For all this passage, cf. Vergil, *Æn.*, VI, 236 *et seq.*

349. — 219. **Remorse of Conscience.** Note the close relation which these allegorical shapes (*Remorse of Conscience, Dread, Revenge, Misery, Care, Sleep, Old Age, Malady, Famine, War, Deadly Debate*), bear to the theme of the entire poem. The *Mirror for Magistrates* was designed to show, by historical examples, the perils and misfortunes that attend worldly eminence, and these terrible apparitions, strongly imagined and graphically described, are, for the most part, personifications of the ills which attend greatness. Cf. the similar figures in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk. II, Canto VI, st. 22, etc.

351. — 271. **Brushing up the breres.** The expression *brushing up* is variously used; thus in some parts of England it is applied to a particular method of cutting and training hedges, and "to brush up" also means "to mow nettles, thistles, and rough grass" (Wright, *Eng. Dia. Dict.*). The picture here suggested is that of *Care*, continually busy upon his poor task of cutting, or trimming, the roughest and most thankless growths. His hands are *tawed* (tanned, hardened) the horny, battered hands of the labourer. Such was the labour of the furze-cutter (whom Sackville may have had in

mind), who cut the prickly growth on the wild heaths or wastes, and bound it in fagots. Readers of Hardy's *Return of the Native*, will recall the description of the heath and the furze-cutters in its opening chapters. — 281. **Cousin of Death.** Homer calls sleep the brother of death (*Iliad*, 14, 231), and the idea has been repeated by Chapman, B. Griffin, Shelley, and countless others. *Cousin* is probably here used in the more general sense of kinsman. — 294. **Irus.** The huge beggar in Homer's *Iliad* who kept watch over Penelope. Morley points out that Ovid uses Crœsus and Irus as types of wealth and poverty. — 299. **The Sisters.** The three Fates, — the "fatal Sisters," — *Atropos*, *Clotho*, and *Lachesis*.

355. — 407. **Great Macedo.** *I.e.* Alexander the Great of Macedon. The "fight" referred to was the battle of Arbela, B.C. 331. — 413. **Consul Paulus.** *I.e.* Lucius Æmilius Paulus, defeated and killed at the battle of Cannæ, 216 B.C. — 414–415. **Trasimene: Treby field.** Two brilliant victories of Hannibal over the Romans. Trebia (Treby field) was 218 B.C., and Lake Trasimenus (Trasimene) 217 B.C. — 426. **The queen**, etc. *I.e.* Tomyris, a Scythian, the Queen of the Massagetæ. According to Herodotus, Tomyris swore by the sun that unless Cyrus — who was invading her territories — would consent to her demands she would give him his fill of blood. Having rejected her terms, Cyrus was defeated and killed, and Tomyris "directed his head to be thrown into a vessel filled with human blood, exclaiming that she would give him his fill of blood, as she had vowed" (Her. I, CCXII–CCXIV). Sackville tells the story in part in "*The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham*," which he contributed to *The Mirror for Magistrates:* —

> "His head, dismember'd from his mangled corpse,
> Herself she cast into a vessel fraught
> With clottered blood of them that felt her force,
> And with these words a just reward she taught:
> 'Drink now thy fill of thy desiréd draught.'"
>
> (Stanza 14.)

356. — 432. **Thebès I saw.** " Reference is to the story in the ' Thebaid ' of Statius, one of the most popular Latin books in and before Sackville's time" (Morley). — 456. **The flames upspring**, etc. Sackville follows the account of the sack of Troy in Vergil, *Æn.* II, (see *c.g.* ll. 202 *et seq.* and 403 *et seq.*)

357. — 471. **In the shield.** *I.e.* pictured in the targe, or shield, that hung by the side of *War*, and on which all these horrors were " depainted " (*supra*, ll. 399–400).

359. — 533. **Henry, Duke of Buckingham.** *I.e.* Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham, b. about 1440. He supported Richard III in his usurpation of the crown, and was made Lord High Constable of England. Having taken part in a plot to restore the house of Lancaster, he was executed in 1483. His *Complaint* (which Sackville contributed to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, see note **355**, 426, *supra*) immediately follows the *Induction*. This is the Buckingham of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, and of the famous line which Colley Cibber inserted in that play: —

" Off with his head, so much for Buckingham."

— 534. **Pilled.** Means primarily bald (cf. *pilde*, l. 333, *supra*), stripped of hair (O.F. *piller*, F. *peler*), and hence secondarily, as here, with the gloss or surface worn off, threadbare.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Sir Philip Sidney, called by Spenser " the president of Noblesse and of Chevalree " and by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, " the precious light of our skie," was born at Penshurst, Kent, in 1554. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, was an administrator of Ireland, and his mother was a sister of the Earl of Leicester. He was educated at Oxford; and he was prominent in court life until 1579. At the early age of twenty-two he was employed as an ambassador by Queen Elizabeth. He fell at the battle of Zutphen in 1586.

Sidney was looked upon by the men of his time as the pattern of knighthood. He possessed a charm of manner that

won for him the admiration not merely of individual friends, but of the entire nation, and even of foreign peoples. At the time of his early death at Zutphen, all England went into mourning, and Oxford and Cambridge universities, together with numerous verse-writers, uttered their tributes to him in some two hundred elegies. The Netherlanders begged to be allowed to keep his body, and promised to erect to his memory a monument, " yea though the same should cost half-a-ton of gold in the building."

Sidney was equally famous as a man of exquisite culture, representing in his scholarly, philosophical, and poetic interests the most advanced learning of the Renaissance. He was known almost as widely on the Continent for these accomplishments as he was in England. William the Silent thought him one of the ablest statesmen in Europe. He travelled in Germany, France, and Italy, studied contemporary Italian literature and science, and associated with Languet, Tintoretto, and Veronese. It was not only Greville, Hakluyt, and Spenser, in England, that dedicated works to him, but the Italian philosopher Bruno. In literature Sidney's interests were of the broadest. He exerted a profound influence upon Elizabethan romance, criticism, and poetry. His *Arcadia* (1590) was an inspiration and a mine of suggestion to many contemporary and subsequent romancers. His *Defense of Poesie* (*cir.* 1581) was the most notable critical essay of Elizabethan literature, and has taken a lasting place in the critical literature of the world. *Astrophel and Stella* entitles him to a high place among the sonnet writers of his time. With Spenser, Gabriel Harvey, and others, Sidney was a leader in the discussion of poetic principles, and in the attempt to refine English prosody. By his own songs and sonnets, he was one of the first to vindicate the principles of English versification, and to prove that English poetry was capable of a classic finish and grace.

Much discussion has centred about the personal element in Sidney's sonnets. There are those, notably Professor Morley,

Professor Courthope, and Mr. Sidney Lee, who have seen in these poems little more than graceful exercises of the imagination, written in honor of a lady of the court "for the amusement of the public." While others believe that they reveal the throb of a genuine passion, in this matter the reader may be left to judge for himself.

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